The COUNTRY CHURCH AS IT IS

A. J. Wm. MYERS
and
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The Country Church As It Is

A Case Study of Rural Churches and Leaders

BY

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INTRODUCTION

BY

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The social and economic changes which have so vitally affected the rural life of our country during the last few years have not left the churches untouched. Because better roads and consolidated schools and farm machinery, and automobile, telephone, and radio have made farm life more interesting and brought the outer world to the farmer's door, the churches could not remain static and hope to retain their place of leadership in rural communities. Abandoned farms are directly reflected in decadent churches, and even where the population has not declined, farms have been subdivided or sold to strangers, foreigners have taken the place of the native American stock with the result that old customs have deteriorated and old neighbourliness has disappeared. The rural community in many places has ceased to be homogeneous but the average rural church has been content to minister to only one type of people.

The betterment of social conditions in rural areas has caught the imagination of some of the best minds of our day, and improved agriculture has held the centre of the stage for a long time. Educators were interested and the consolidated school supplanted the "little white schoolhouse." New forms of social alignment and cooperative effort like the Grange sprung up so that a new form of community interests has arisen, but frequently the church held to its own way, unmindful of the fact that the world without had grown more interesting and religion had become stodgy and had lost its sacredness. In some places these changes took place in spite of the church and it was a brave pastor and a brave people who were willing to pioneer in the effort to adjust the rural church to the needs of the community.

The intense individualism of the rural dweller offers a happy hunting ground for sects of all sorts. The very barrenness of the early days reacted quickly to some of the more extravagant and hyper-emotional forms of preaching and teaching. These fitful flames flared up and then died out, leaving only a handful of adherents while the older forms of religious life, weakened by the inroads of controversy and competition struggled along. A far-seeing Christian statesmanship perceived the necessity of reducing the number of churches, harnessing the wastefulness of competition into spiritual dynamic and conserving the money spent on fitful existence of weak churches for real constructive and helpful service for the community. It was soon discovered, however, that the cure for the evils due to competition was not found by simply putting churches together. Consolidation was no substitute for consecrated common sense. The various shibboleths of combination did not woo the indifferent nor silence the ungodly. It is increasingly evident that the real cure for the rural church problem is to be found in an adequate program for the rural church which shall be sympathetic enough to meet every unsatisfied need of the community and broad enough to include as many varieties of religious experience and training as circumstances will allow. This program must also have an adequate leadership.

In addition to willingness and consecration there must be added a well-balanced and thoroughly tested technique. The average rural minister must not only be willing to serve the community but get the "hang of the thing" which he is to do. It is to such inquiring minds and earnest souls who are willing to pay the great price of an effective rural ministry that this book will appeal. It has been forged white-hot on the anvil of experience and by the hammer of necessity. It emerges from the life of the rural people, from the struggles and triumphs of the rural ministry and from the desire to make those things which have been acceptable to many people and blest by God available also to those who are always seeking if by some way they might win men.

The writer feels constrained to render words of praise to the rural ministers of this great land. In the cry for better leadership in the rural churches, it should not be forgotten that these men are rendering a sacrificial service and that some of the conditions calling for a remedy are the result of an honest, even though it may be unwise, effort. As long as farmers exist so long will they send forth into our community life groups of young people made resourceful by their contact with nature, calm of spirit because they have been immune from city noise, healthful with the strength of the hills and the trees, and flaming with a desire for education. To minister to such as these and help them step over the threshold into the great world, is the supreme joy and task of the rural minister. It is a privilege which many a man might well covet, and the world is full of consecrated men and women, pastors of rural churches and their wives, who are devotedly trying to be worthy of their marvellous stewardship. "Thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren * * which have borne witness * * before the church; whom if thou bring forward on their journey * * thou shalt do well, because that for His name's sake they went forth."

FOREWORD

MANY country churches have been visited and studied. The experience was so vital and telling that it seemed as if it should be shared with others. But it is impossible to describe any large number of these churches. A few were selected, the attempt being made to give as wide a variety of situations as possible. It was planned at first to group them according to size or condition of the community but when the cases were analyzed and recorded they grouped themselves. The more successful are called Group A; the least promising form, Group C; and those more mixed in character comprize Group B. It was interesting to find that each group contained the same number of cases.

The attempt has been consciously made to describe things as they are and not to exalt Group A, and much less to paint those in Group C black in order to form a background. Indeed some churches were excluded because an accurate description might have seemed overdrawn, if not incredible.

It would be quite unjust to describe churches by name. For this reason fictitious names are used and other non-essentials have been changed to prevent identification. But every description is accurate in all essentials and is the result of first hand study.

It is impossible to describe any church fully in a brief space. Each situation is very complex and many forces play upon it. All that is attempted is to sketch the church as faithfully as possible. One impression that it is hoped has been left, is that neither the leaders nor the people in Group A think their work has been completed, but rather that it has been little more than begun.

From a first hand knowledge of many country churches and the intensive study of some of them certain differences in how the work is carried on impress themselves forcibly on the investigator. The questions, Why has this succeeded? Why is that failing? cannot be avoided. Partial answers, at least, are found in the quality and kind of program attempted and in the methods pursued; and in the leadership. These two important matters are discussed in Parts II and III.

In Part II the principles of country church life and work which made for success in the cases studied are set forth. This is by no means an exhaustive treatment. Any reader can deduce his own findings from the descriptions given in Part I. The only thing he lacks is the intimate knowledge of the churches of which the write-up is such a small part.

Leadership is universally recognized as of great importance in church work. These studies emphasize this point. In Part III characteristics and qualities of the leaders studied are presented. The deduction seems to be clear that if the country church is to progress it must look to its leaders. And the denominations in turn must scrutinize anew the kind of training their students are getting for their life work in the theological seminaries.

"The world is changing, continually and rapidly." This was proclaimed from every parish. Is the country church ministering to the world in which it finds itself or to some imagined world probably of a past age? Many churches and their leaders did not seem to be conscious of the world in which they were set.

In the Appendix is found a very brief list of books helpful to leaders and people in the country church; and also a program of evangelism suggested by one denomination. No brief is held for the latter. It is merely submitted as an exhibit of a tendency toward a broader conception of the country church's ministry.

Whatever its limitations and errors this study is an attempt to see the country church as it is and to suggest principles of program and leadership that may be a guide and inspiration to others.

If a credo is called for, it may be said that the study leads to a deeper conviction as to the place of the country church in its own community, in the nation and in the world; that with good average leaders it has a great service to render and that its possibilities were never greater; that these churches are rich in latent leadership and in a constituency which responds to worthy enterprizes; that religious education is of crucial importance and significance; and that the Christian religion is the most vital and the most life-giving of all the forces which bear upon country life.

Hartford, Conn.

A.J.W.M.
E.E.S.

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I

A STUDY OF RURAL CHURCHES

GROUP A

THE MORE PROMISING CHURCHES

1. ASCOT; An American Country Township
2. MOUNT HOPE; A “Foreign” Rural Community
3. RILAND; A Rural Village
4. PINE VALLEY; An Open Country District
5. BRUNSWICK; A Canadian Open Country Parish

CASE 1

The town (township) of Ascot is a New England farming community comprizing some twelve hundred souls, the great majority of whom are of English speaking stock. Scattered among these are some non-English speaking farmers who have good farms and are quite prosperous. In addition there are three small communities quite distinct and separate from each other. Here is a cluster of small houses, little better than shacks, where a dozen families, chiefly Polish, live. Another is a small settlement of the less desirable class of Italians. The third consists of a few houses filled with promiscuous Negro families of the thriftless, ne'er-do-well, drinking type.

The township is in a river valley and the chief industry is tobacco raising. Dairying, poultry raising and vegetable growing are secondary. A packing plant near the railroad station on the lake and a nursery in the village are the only other "industries." The village comprizes a group of houses at the crossroads, with postoffice, stores, churches and inn.

During the war tobacco prices were high and everyone's standard of expenditures became equally inflated. A farmers' cooperative tobacco concern failed, almost ruining a number of farmers. At the close of the war there was a great slump in prices. The high cost of labour,—many tobacco pickers being employed

—of fertilizers and overhead, created serious financial difficulties and some farmers became bankrupt.

The general education of the adults was perhaps the fifth grade but the intelligence was high. Homes were very comfortable. Almost everyone had autos and electric lights, while furnaces, running water with modern conveniences, and radios were common. The morality was a good, high average. Few read anything except the local papers and odd, light magazines. District schools persisted. There were ten one roomed schools dotted over the town(ship) with a two room school at the centre. Transportation was provided by the town for all pupils attending high school in Northrup, a town of five thousand, five miles distant, or in River End, a city ten miles away.

There were two living churches. The larger one, at the centre, had about one hundred communicants. It is this one which engages our attention. The preaching and whole conduct of church and school as well as the religious and intellectual outlook of the minister were almost identical with what they had been fifty or one hundred years before. In the meantime, as the preceding paragraph indicates, the whole life of the place had been revolutionized in the last twenty years! Four miles away was a much smaller church of another denomination having not over twenty-five communicants. It was of the same general type. Neither church building had any accommodation except the auditorium. In the town there were fully two score families who had no contact with any church and who were utterly indifferent to religion. The church offered little more than the Sunday services already described, and the average attendance on Sunday morning at the larger church was some twenty discouraged people. The Sunday school was very small and had little vitality. Not for years, if ever, had they given over one hundred dollars to missions and the total revenue was about thirteen hundred dollars a year.

The most active agencies in the community, other than the churches, were the grange, the public library, and a luncheon club in the nearby town. During the period to be described the Ku Klux Klan flared up for a short while but had little permanent effect. There were no pool rooms or dance halls. The village itself was quite a trading centre but Northrup and River End, already referred to, were the real centres for trade, movies and other interests. These places were now only a few minutes (by auto) from the farms.

What could the church do in this situation? These are some of the things the church at the centre under a new minister accomplished in a few years.

The morale was built up. The history of the church itself covering two hundred years was one of the interests taken advantage of which stimulated new life. The church school developed, organized gradually with Kindergarten, and Primary (meeting in separate parts of church and gallery) and "Main" school. The monthly meeting of teachers, teacher training, summer schools, workers library, all tended to develop a new consciousness and attitude. The young people began to organize and plan their own work.

Finally the church decided to build a church house, install a new heating plant and repair and redecorate the church. The new life in the church, seeking to express itself in innumerable ways, embodied itself in more adequate and beautiful visible form, and this in turn attracted attention and deepened interest. The other church, a few miles away, also improved its equipment. The two congregations grew in their friendly relations and cooperation.

Now, with an adequate church plant having separate worship rooms for five departments,—Kindergarten, Primary, Junior and adolescents—with the adults meeting in the church,—and classrooms for all except young people and adults, with keen, live teachers ever improving their efficiency and a simple, unified organization, the school grew in numbers and in attractiveness and value. Pupils of all grades carried out enterprizes of study, worship and concrete service which touched their own life and expanded their vision. The auditorium in the church house provided a place for suppers, plays, pageants and social gatherings. The kitchen was well arranged so each person could attend to her work without interfering with others.

Congregations grew to an average of seventy. Revenue increased to over four thousand dollars. The share the church was counted on to contribute to the missionary work of the denomination was met every year in full, amounting to five hundred dollars, there being only one other church in the area reaching the goal. Increased spiritual life brought increased friendliness. Friendly visits, without any ulterior purpose such as money raising, were definitely arranged for,—visitors from one "district" calling on people in another district—and neighbourhood gatherings including all, regardless of race, promoted understanding and good-will. The "Friendly Visitors" were surprised to find how much they themselves enjoyed the calling; while those called upon were delighted with the social contacts. The children of the "foreigners" and a few Negro children became an integral part of the church school. Vacation Church Schools ministered to all these and a special Vacation School was carried on in the Italian settlement. The Young People's Society soon devised its own programs and carried them out with great verve. One of the means by which the young people were trained in initiative was through regular meetings of its "Cabinet" where every member was responsible for his own department and all plans were thoroughly discussed and adopted by the whole before being put into operation.

Local leadership was developed in every department of the church's work. Children of all ages, from the Kindergarten up, were trained in leading in their own departments in worship, study and service. Young people carried practically full responsibility for all their work, developing their own program, and by specific classes and summer schools were fitted to do constructive work. Latent leadership among adults was stimulated with gratifying response. The older boys followed the general principles of the Christian Citizenship Training program and the older girls that of the Canadian Girls in Training. These simply provided suggestions and materials for the through-the-week meetings of the pupils of these ages. In this way the whole program of an adolescent was an integral part of the church. No part of the church's proper work was handed over to any outside organization however good it might be. The women also organized themselves into a club for recreation and general culture and the men likewise. These clubs were essentially parts of the church and ministered to social, cultural and vocational interests of the people. Such events as Mother and Daughter and Father and Son banquets and parents classes and other special programs tended to deepen the sense of unity and the "family" feeling in the church. One feature of the church school among many may be mentioned. It was believed the church school should be a singing school and a trained singer was associated with each department which also had its own piano or organ. These were local people who were "discovered" and who did their work voluntarily. The church school stood the severe test of two rather disastrous years after the minister left. The local leaders, trained in practise as well as in theory, maintained the efficiency of the school in a remarkable way.

The aim was to unify the church as much as possible. The whole organization was centralized in the "Church Committee." Being a small church it included all the elders or deacons, trustees or managers, religious education committee, and two representatives from each major interest of the church, men's work, women's organizations, Young People's Society, Sunday school, etc. The religious education committee sought to develop a unified program for all ages and for vacation time as well as through the school year.

The finances of the church were unified. There was but one budget. The total, including what was to go to missions, was adopted and the proportion covering missions set apart for that purpose. In this way the Women's Meetings put their strength into educational (worship, study and service) programs and not into money raising. The church set apart half of the necessary expenses of the church school so all grades in the school were trained in considering the needs of the local church and of people in other places.

The minister gave attention to preaching, believing it to be a most important part of the church work. The morning worship was also studied and improved, particularly in providing for the children. Pastoral work was not neglected, the aim being to visit every family not related to any other church, regularly twice a year. The fringe of the unchurched was pushed back somewhat. But the most time and interest was necessarily given where the opportunity and need were greatest—namely, to the work with children and youth and to stimulating and developing leaders. Soon there were enough responsible leaders to carry on and ensure progress with a surplus for any emergency.

Through the church public opinion was quickened along these specific lines: Community betterment; library service; neigbourhood and town friendliness; intellectual pursuits—reading, lectures, study; social betterment—in the parish and by actual visitation and help of worthy social agencies beyond the town; farmers cooperation; obligations to the foreigners; world interest—manifested in study and support of mission work, of peace and better international relations. To take but two instances: It was thought that some of the foreign children were undernourished. Through a health agency a survey was made. One child was found to be tubercular and another defective. Both were brought to the attention of the proper authorities and given the best expert care, far beyond the financial possibilities of the families concerned. The church people were active in the grange and the grange people in the church. The grange sometimes helped defray expenses of leadership training in the local churches.

The church assumed its rightful place as the centre and inspiration of the community, in spite of the drag of the towns and other competing interests. The church school increased by half in enrolment and more than that in attendance. Every year older pupils in the church school naturally entered into full communion in the church and many adults as well. It was found that intelligently directed religious education was most effective evangelism in the best sense. Through giving itself in meeting interests and needs the church found a larger and richer spiritual life.

Ascot, during this period, was blessed with a rare type of leadership. The pastor, who could give only part time to the church, was fully trained for religious work and was known through this region for his sympathetic interest and leadership in Christian education. He was widely read and familiar with many related phases of his specific task. Through his challenging ministry he inspired those who followed him and continuously held before his people still greater achievements and possibilities.

His wife had many gifts—music, leadership of children, social charm and inspiring friendship. A person of wide culture and of many interests, she had a great love for people and a sympathetic interest in their welfare.

In appearance the minister was exceptionally neat and tidy. There was a healthy sense of interest and understanding about him which caused all who met him to feel that he was concerned in them personally. Thus he shared among all grades and classes the finest and best of himself. His sermons carefully prepared and delivered, were constructive and practical and breathed an air of gentleness and Christian humility. One of the finest virtues of this leader of men was his readiness to have others share in the work; his trusting attitude; his willingness to remain in the background. There was nothing boastful or self-commendatory about him. His deeds and his life as much as his words preached the gospel.

CASE 2

Mount Hope is a larger parish in the sense that it includes an area of over thirty-five square miles, has two churches, two preaching stations—now combined into one organization—and two full time, paid workers; and that it ministers to all the people within this field. For nearly one hundred and seventy-five years this old community remained solidly American. Then came the exodus to the West and the call of busy industrial centres. Farms were abandoned or sold to whoever was willing to buy. Within a generation a complete change in the population had taken place. By 1924 people from no less than thirteen other nations lived within the boundaries of Mount Hope, and while the population remained at a standstill, numbering one thousand and twenty-four in 1770 and one thousand and forty in 1920, it was almost totally different in culture and nationality. Meantime the old industries, —glass, hat and shoe factories—had also perished. The new citizen, however, introduced new ideas. He began to work the neglected farm lands and to establish small mills of various descriptions. A large and prosperous thread mill added to the economic stability of the community and people were generally comfortable.

The church faced a serious problem. As the native population continued to diminish by deaths and removals and the new citizens, being mostly of Central European birth, seemed to care very little for religious activities, the membership dwindled rapidly until it became a matter of serious concern. Letters to the annual conference usually sounded a discouraging note and once a pastor, reviewing the local situation, openly declared that the opportunities for service had become very limited because of the overwhelming presence of the foreign born, their number being estimated at over eighty percent of the total population.

Several short pastorates, prior to the year 1924, had hindered any progress. Moreover, a serious division within the church had in a measure prevented forward steps. The controversy originated over a century ago but it still agitated several prominent families. Meantime the invasion of the European born continued until the conquest was complete and final. Henceforth, if the church was to exist at all, it would have to minister to the new families and draw from them new blood and new leadership. In 1918 only two pupils, both American, enrolled in the nearby high school, but in 1924 Mount Hope sent thirty-five scholars to the same school, nearly all being children of the foreign born. In four of the eight district schools not a child could claim American parentage, and in two others only three could do so. Out of a total enrolment of one hundred and fifty in the two vacation church schools in 1925, one hundred and thirty were of foreign origin, coming from Czech, Polish, Russian, Italian, Austrian, and Hungarian parentage. For miles and miles around the country side one could traverse picturesque byways without striking a single American homestead. Unfortunately, these people were not interested in the local church. Their background was unhappy; and their memories were still filled with wars and hardships, persecutions and bloodshed, some of which had been due to the Christian church in their homeland. Moreover they had been snubbed on some occasions, by the native born and, unintentionally no doubt, were led to believe that the church belonged to the Americans and was for them alone. This accentuated the problem for this church by widening the gulf between the two groups.

There were few cooperative projects within or without the church for two main reasons: Poor leadership on the part of some of the ministers and their associates; and the acuteness of local problems due to racial, political and religious differences. Fortunately, however, the Mount Hope church could name ten splendid women workers who all through the years had proved themselves devoted to the church.

The church building proper consisted of two rooms, one a social hall seating less than seventy-five people, and the auditorium which provided for about one hundred and seventy-five. The building and equipment showed good judgement and taste. Across the road was the Town Hall which could be used for social purposes. Besides, there were in the community several liberal givers, though the local budget prior to 1924 did not exceed two thousand dollars. Church attendance had become discouragingly small and the work was carried on by a handful of the faithful.

Then came a new leader. He was, himself, of foreign birth and at once saw the opportunity such a community as this presented to the church. His task was twofold: to lay before his own people local data and facts and help them to see the needs at Mount Hope; and to win the friendship of the foreign born and lead them to understand that the church was truly theirs and that it sought their welfare and their co-operation. He began by extensive pastoral service, calling in every home and befriending every person in the community. He secured the interest of his church leaders and won their hearty support. Then followed a careful study of the community and the development of a new program based upon revealed needs.

The program simply grew. Under the circumstances two needs seemed uppermost, first the uniting of all the nationals through the church in a happy, brotherly community; and secondly, to continually broaden the vision of those within the church and win their whole-hearted support in carrying out the larger task. Thus there came into being two vacation church schools each summer. These were so successful that from them were born in neighbouring towns no less than eleven others. In five years a total of six hundred and twenty-five children were enrolled, most of them coming from non-native stock. Extensive transportation was used, the school board donating its truck for that purpose.

The need for week-day religious education was apparent since few of these children ever attended any religious services anywhere. Many had never entered any church. Accordingly a full time director of religious education was employed and one hour each week in eight rural schools was released for religious teaching. This program has been a distinct help. The public schools were also used for friendship socials to which all the neighbours were invited, the school children and teachers arranging most of the program. The pastor and people attended and shared in these happy occasions. Stereopticon slides were freely used in these schools and also in the homes.

With the aid of the Farm Bureau and encouraged by its leadership school children became interested in an annual "Flower Show," when flowers which they themselves had cultivated were exhibited in the church. Each year the graduating eighth grade attended church service in a body, wearing their graduation clothes. Each scholar was presented with a copy of the New Testament signed by the pastor and church. They sang their class songs and united in a dedication prayer. School teachers, though frequently of other faiths, were always cooperative.

During the summer season much calling and helpful service was rendered by the Adult Committee, a body in charge of all adult activities. They planned also "home socials" held in various country homes and arranged the many suppers which came to be monthly affairs in the local church. A summer camp for young people originated in 1924 and continued for many years.

The young people organized a society and depended altogether upon their own creative ability to arrange programs and affairs of interest and helpfulness to all. They also undertook a great many projects designed to help the church and the pastor. Many of these young folk, most of whom became members of the church, were children of the new citizens. From this group went out several into definite Christian service. They proved unusually faithful in church attendance and were the mainspring in the church school which in the meantime began to prosper and increase in efficiency. On one occasion when one of their number died unexpectedly and the pastor was called to render a trying service to the stricken family, these youths sent him a beautifully worded testimonial carrying thirty-four signatures. Incidentally, everyone who signed that paper became a member of the church within a few years. There were no special drives or campaigns; yet the membership increased rapidly, a total of nearly one hundred being added to the roll in five years, most of them bearing names of immigrant origin.

The church also became interested in promoting an extensive recreational program for the children and young people, using the splendidly equipped school gymnasium at Winding River, a few miles away, and the adjoining athletic field for that purpose. An extensive transportation system brought many to the various church services.

Of special worth and interest was the distinct Czecho-Slovakian work. This was promoted with the approval of the Adult Committee through the pastor, and was actually accomplished by a Czech student who happened to be available for religious work. Under his leadership the people observed President Masaryk's birthday, and other national events; conducted a series of religious services in the church; and united with the church in celebrating such occasions as Christmas and Thanksgiving. One group of girls, all of them of foreign stock, were requested to assume the responsibility for a Mother's day program in the church. To this they responded with unusual eagerness and ability. They and their successors have continued this service every year, providing a most beautiful religious service on that day.

A community band came into being, the minister playing a part and guiding this fine group of high school boys. They rendered distinctive service on many occasions, going about to scattered centres of population and playing, free of cost, to all who cared to listen to these open air concerts. They also provided the music at several socials and town affairs. Meantime the organization of the field was recast, there being three committees having charge of the Adult, Young People's and Children's work respectively. The chairman of these three, together with the pastor and director of religious education, composed the Religious Education Committee.

Finally the program included every phase of community interest. There were classes for those who desired to master English; new citizens were directed and aided through the process which gave them full political rights; a number of serious health problems were cared for by the church through its Adult Committee; needs were met and at Christmas and Thanksgiving needy people and the aged were kindly remembered; clothing, toys, reading matter and food stuffs were freely distributed. Thanksgiving and Christmas were especially devoted to giving and sharing in this way. In fact the whole emphasis at Christmas time was on giving through a "White Gift" service in the church in which every organization in the community shared by contributing something of practical value to some institution, or cause, or person. Service was rendered in a hundred ways to homes, families and individuals.

Other features were the fellowship suppers and friendship socials in the church, town hall and homes. These proved highly effective in promoting good-will and understanding. For five years the attendance at the monthly suppers, given at cost, averaged over one hundred. Different organizations were in turn responsible for the program which followed the supper.

The result was inevitable. New workers were enrolled and new members were won to definite church loyalty. A finer spirit was developed and people learned to share and cooperate in a most cordial manner in making the church vital and of human value. Some of the problems met tested again and again the mettle of leaders and the people, and, of course, many problems remained unsolved. The program, however, was a growing thing ever reaching out to new ventures. One of the interesting features is that all of this work, built up during a five year pastorate, was carried on efficiently by the local leaders after the minister had left and has continued under his successor. The vital projects became the people's own concern. They are alert to recognize new needs and have the intelligence and vigour to try to meet them as they arise.

The minister was of foreign birth, as has been indicated. He had, through his own unaided efforts, taken preparatory school work and then a full theological course. When he came to Mount Hope he was about thirty years of age. Discovering his need of further training he studied for several years in a school of religious education, forty miles away, while engaged in a busy pastorate. This broadened his horizon, strengthened his technique, and incidentally earned him academic degrees. He carried himself well, straight and erect, dressed with taste and care; was always well groomed and clean, giving the impression of health, vigour and good-will. "We are always proud of our minister, anywhere, on any occasion," his parishioners were in the habit of commenting. Having known poverty, he had a sympathetic insight into the lives of the poor, but could minister equally well to the wealthy. The minister had the faculty of talking matters over frankly with people. It did not matter how delicate the situation was he treated it objectively and never made the issue personal for he was never seeking his own ends or "to put anything over" on the congregation. He was an indefatigable worker in the study as well as in his field. Families in sorrow, in moral troubles and suffering from material misfortunes knew his care. He was a true shepherd and loved people above everything. His charming wife was equally beloved by all and a great inspiration and help to her husband. Having known the handicap of living in a foreign land, he helped the foreign born in their struggles for citizenship and for a mastery of English. When he resigned one of the wealthy members of the Mount Hope church honoured his Theological School with a generous gift as an expression of appreciation for what this shepherd of old and young had meant to the Mount Hope community.

He had repeated opportunities to accept invitations to candidate elsewhere, once in an unusually large and prosperous city church, but he persistently refused to consider such promotions. Through his state he was known for his interest in rural churches. His church was the first country church in that area to promote church vacation schools and week-day religious education. He also arranged inspiring and helpful conferences for rural workers. And with it all the pastor found time to serve on several committees outside his own parish. He taught in several summer schools for country ministers and was the director of Christian education for his own county.

CASE 3

RILAND parish or circuit had four churches with one minister. The pastor who located there in 1923 revived a fifth. For a time he preached in all five churches each Sunday and also taught in two or three of the Sunday schools. Later, due to exodus of population, one station closed. Then the Sunday schedule was as follows:

VALLEY—10 A. M.—Preaching; 11 A. M.—taught class of young people.
CAPE FAIR—1 P. M.—Church and Sunday school, combined service.
STRAIGHT HILL—2 P. M.—Preaching service.
ROSSLYN—7 P. M.—Preaching service and Christian Endeavor.

These services were all shared by the minister's wife who taught in two schools, sponsored two young people's societies and travelled extensively through the parish each Sunday with her husband. She was virtually an assistant pastor—except that she received no salary.

Each church building provided an auditorium only. There were no other accommodations. The church membership varied from nine at Valley, to only two at Straight Hill, and some of these never attended. Not one of the total number, thirty-seven in all, was under forty years of age and several were above sixty. There had not been a single addition in the entire circuit for many years. One of the churches had not welcomed a new member in twenty-five years. Families are all interrelated, especially at Valley, where all live on homesteads handed down from generation to generation.

Not many families get their living directly from the farms. A number keep cows and sell milk, butter and cream, but the majority depend upon other means of making a living. Timber is scarce and cord wood is fast disappearing. There are a few summer residents but these contribute in no way at all to town affairs. The native population is gradually giving way to Finnish and Polish people. Roman Catholics are few in number. Several families among the foreign born are openly atheistic. The five communities, while near each other and having some similar characteristics, all present problems that are peculiarly local and different.

Among these problems is the difficult-to-meet practise of being perfectly content with the old way of living. Most people are in a rut which becomes deeper each year and a spirit of "what's the use" and "we've always done it thus" prevails everywhere. Many of these families seem to be unaware of progress! Their mentality is low—"about that of a seventh grade child," says one local authority,—and their background makes the entire outlook nearly hopeless. Many are "against" any progressive moves and oppose suggestions with fervour and conviction. Gossip flourishes, however, and talk moves in a very narrow range of the same old topics.

One delicate problem was how to remove from office and positions of leadership many of those who were unqualified for their work. In almost every case it resulted in painful experiences for the pastor, but it had to be done and was accomplished in as kindly a manner as possible.

These churches were in no wise touching or trying to minister to the needs of young life, or indeed to the life of the community. Church members considered that their duty consisted in attending preaching service and occasionally, at remote periods, a social function of some sort. Needless to add, the church was about ready to go out of business altogether. A congregation of ten was good indeed. No money was given to missions; nor was there any regular income of any sort. Weekly cash offerings were the only means of supporting a minister. One church managed to raise four dollars per week for the payment of occasional supplies. None of these organizations had had a business meeting or election of officers in several years.

With the coming of a new leader came also a revival in interest. Sensing the needs he began by making the church the spiritual and friendly social centre in each community. With this in mind there were many social affairs, suppers, and entertainments. The young people quickly responded. Nearly all the officers today at Rosslyn, Valley and Cape Fair are young people who were not in the church a few years ago. Some of the changes in these folk have been nothing short of miraculous. In no way is this due to any unusual genius, or power of the minister. It is the result of years of faithful presentation of Christ as a living, present day power in human life and the carrying on of a constructive program of religious Education wherever opportunity offered.

One phase of the program was to encourage young people to attend conventions, conferences and gatherings outside their own community. Many have attended summer schools, camps and rallies for several successive years. For six summers the pastor has conducted a summer camp on the seashore for his young people. This cost each participant seven dollars and fifty cents per week. All of this meant strenuous work and ceaseless planning and thoughtfulness on the part of the pastor, but he has been amply rewarded by increased consecration and loyalty among the young.

Financially the Riland parish has faced some terrible trials. People have been slow to respond to the pledge system and the use of weekly envelopes. It is noteworthy, however, that all the young people use this system very faithfully. Valley has averaged six hundred dollars per year since 1923; Cape Fair now has in addition a fund which pays five hundred dollars annually; this church gives seven dollars per member to missionary projects; Rosslyn gives four hundred and ten dollars per year through direct pledging, while the Straight Hill church has gone out of existence.

A good transportation system is in use, a school bus going from one section of the parish to another carrying people to church and four private cars reach out in several directions each Sunday morning and evening. The two young people's organizations are in a healthy, vigorous condition. There is an active Ladies' Aid Society, a Boy Scout troop which meets at the parsonage, organized intermediate groups, a teacher training class which meets each month and a number of happy social gatherings each season.

Today (1930) the Valley church has a membership of thirty-one, over one-half of whom are under twenty-five years of age. Cape Fair has several young folk who are community leaders. Rosslyn is the miracle spot. This church now has forty-one members, most of them active. Five valuable additions were recently welcomed into this church. The Sunday school averages about forty in attendance. For the past three years, three of the four churches have paid their missionary quota in full for the first time in years and years.

The program has also included the use of community moving pictures, stereopticon slides, leadership training groups, etc. There is an endless number of engagements for the minister and his wife who have thus remade a circuit which was once lifeless and unconcerned in the affairs of men. Thousands of mimeographed announcements, bulletins and programs have been issued by the pastor and all absent church members receive the church bulletin each week through the mail.

This hard working, earnest pastor is about forty years of age. One of his most striking characteristics is his eagerness to try different methods and search for new ideas. He is a good preacher, splendid organizer, and a great friend of the young who come to him for advice and counsel. His industry and ceaseless efforts to lift these small villages and their inhabitants to a more abundant life is self-evident. Through his busy pastorate he had taken time to attend rural conferences and summer schools thus broadening his own vision and enriching his mind. His wife is a friendly, sociable, active woman of good ability and pleasing ways. The two form an excellent team and have more than proved their worth in the Riland parish where they have laboured and sacrificed many years for the sheer joy of being in Christian service. Their salary has never been good; just sufficient to care for the necessities of themselves and their two children. Their willingness and wholesome appreciation of the opportunities in this field are truly refreshing. Both are students and keep open the windows and doors of their minds.

CASE 4

One of the most remarkable one man larger parishes in the Northwest is that of Pine Valley. Within this area are four small churches with a fifth in a larger village centre. This is altogether a rural farming district dotted here and there with groups of dwellings. The land is not of the most fertile sort and farmers are not overly prosperous. Homes are often very limited in comforts, some having little more than the bare necessities of life. The people are hardy, thrifty, and mostly of foreign stock. The nearest city of any consequence lies nearly one hundred miles away. Gravel roads and cross country byways make intercommunication safe and comfortable. Low priced autos are numerous and farm implements are not quite as modern as those found in the wheat and corn belt. A few years ago lumber camps and saw mills flourished through Pine Valley which was, at one time, rich in natural white pine forests. But these have been overexploited. To be sure the hills are still clad with evergreens, but the trees are mostly of a straggling, second growth variety. However, these furnish the homes with fuel and with sufficient lumber for local purposes.

Pine Valley City is a small trading centre, numbering about five hundred inhabitants and is the focus of the interests of every family in Pine Valley. Occasional movies help to enliven and attract and several chain stores are the main base of supplies. There are three churches in Pine Valley City, two of them being of the same denomination. Just why two are needed there no one seems to know, unless it be that in the days past one of them ministered to another language group which has long since been assimilated.

The congregations in Pine Valley City are housed in small but well painted, comfortable buildings. The total salary of the three resident ministers does not exceed twenty-five hundred dollars. One of them, aged, feeble, lives in practical retirement, his church's program being limited to one preaching service a week. The other minister divides his religious duties with that of running a local weekly. He is also the main cog in the town's political affairs and more recently has ambitions to become mayor of the town. His influence, as such, might improve conditions. At any rate a Christian politician would not be amiss in any community and a preaching mayor might well be expected to practise some of the truths he held up to his fellow men. His church, however, due to the many "duties" of their pastor, suffers considerably, there being but one preaching service a week and a prayer meeting usually attended by five or six women. This is the extent of the program. This man, when asked to state the program of his church, thought reference was made to the Order of Service followed on Sunday morning!

But the third church is worshipful, attractively neat and inspiring. There is a comfortable auditorium and a basement which is unusually well lighted and cheerful. However there are no classrooms, but just inside the front entrance is a cozy little "family room" (they called it) equipped with two comfortable chairs, a small crib and a lounge. This, it was explained, is used by someone every Sunday and often by mothers who come to town week-days and leave their child or children there in care of the minister's wife. This room was particularly bright and "homey." Once each month there come from the four churches which are ministered to by the active pastor of this Pine Valley City church, a representative group for an hour of business and then a happy social gathering. The five churches, while each has its independent organization, function also as a unit in projects which concern the entire valley. This includes "home-coming" days, harvest festivals, reunion gatherings in the home church (located four miles to the south) and an annual church family picnic.

The church school in the Pine Valley City church numbers seventy with beginners, primary, and junior departments downstairs and intermediate, senior and adult classes above. They meet once each month in union services. Teachers are eager and intelligent though lesson material consists of quarterlies, helps and papers from publishing houses which have not kept up with progressive developments. This was a hangover from a previous pastorate. There is a fine group of young people with a lively organization, using denominational guidance, but reserving liberty of choice in themes to be considered and programs to be used. The pastor receives a total of twelve hundred dollars and a parsonage, which he had repaired and put in order at his own expense. He also has a car allowance of two hundred dollars per year which covers about one third of the cost.

The Pine Valley churches, five in number, have the following membership and preaching schedule:

PINE VALLEY CITY—One hundred and twenty-seven members; preaching at 9 A. M.; church school at 10; young peoples society at 6 P. M.

PINE RIVER—Seventeen members—seven miles away, preaching at 10:30 A. M.; young peoples society at 11:30—at the time of church school meeting.

PINE CREST—Twenty-two members—no young people—three miles further down the valley—preaching at 3 P. M.; church school at 4.

VALLEY CHURCH—Twenty-one members—church school at 11 A. M.; young peoples society at 6:45 P. M.; preaching at 7:30.

The fifth church at Pine Bluff, having a membership of twenty-seven, holds a Christian Endeavor meeting and church school Sunday morning with a preaching service Wednesday night. This circuit covers exactly forty-two miles. Thus the only field which does not have religious Sunday services conducted by the pastor is the church at Pine Bluff. Each Sunday the pastor preaches four sermons, attends two young people's meetings and teaches in one church school, the one at Pine Crest.

When he came to Pine Valley the church at the "City" was the only one alive. One by one he added the surrounding fields and revived interest. This was mainly accomplished through endless pastoral work and constant helpfulness. In the course of two years he has reestablished the work at three points and is eagerly looking for other openings. This man abounds with enthusiasm and energy. He loves rural life and these hardy, thrifty, struggling farmers. His own garden is a model of productivity. His wife is a blessing and an inspiration. There is not the slightest suggestion of resentment because of the difficulties and problems which this young couple face. Nor are they thinking of changing. Their income is exceedingly small and the pastor's wife confessed with a smile that had it not been for the help of her parents when a baby was born they could not have survived the past year. "As long as we have our health and baby does not get sick, we can manage very well" commented the preacher-worker. Both of these young people radiate happiness and contentment harvested through genuine service. Nowhere could a finer example of unselfish devotion to rural people and rural life be found.

In appearance this pastor is exceedingly acceptable. There is a friendly smile and an expression of good-will upon his face. He radiates cheer. His clothing was neat and tidy. Though living upon a very small income this leader, his wife and home spoke a message of contentment, cleanliness and cheerfulness.

In the pulpit this pastor assumed no sudden sanctimoniousness. His voice and manner remained natural. His preaching was earnest and intelligent. It was easy to recognize that people loved him and followed him gladly. A seminary training had proved inadequate since it never prepared him for the problems of life in a small community like this. Accordingly he attended a summer school for country pastors each vacation period, borrowed books from a distant library and was keenly interested in developments in the field of religious education.

During the first year of his pastorate a heated theological controversy swept this district. Consistently he refused to invest energies in quarrels and negations. Instead he preached and practised a winsome, positive and winning gospel, though often criticized by his fellow preachers for his seeming failure to defend the faith. Through the years he simply lived in his own sincere way for what he believed was the highest good. His good wife shared both joys and trials with rare patience and cheerfulness. He told us that he had resolved to remain five years or more in this needy field and that no advances from better paying fields could tempt him. One could easily see the earnestness and genuiness in this leader and lover of rural people. Having set for himself and his churches several objectives he also determined to see them realized regardless of the sacrifices involved.

CASE 5

This is a real country parish in Eastern Canada. There is no suspicion of a village or even of a cross-roads cluster of houses and stores. The people are descendants of English and Scotch ancestors who settled here several generations ago. There are no foreigners.

A small river flows through the country adding to its beauty, fertility and wealth but necessitating a road on each side thus increasing the mileage and separating the parish into two sections.

There was so much lumbering and fishing in winter that attention was diverted from the real industry which is farming. In winter ready work and good wages were found in lumber camps. Besides the bay and river were, at certain seasons, full of fish, especially smelts. The ice assumed the appearance of a little town with its hundreds of tiny fishing shanties and at night the many lighted lanterns made a delightful picture. There is a gamble in fishing. One may toil all through the cold season and scarcely make wages. But one may take a ton in one haul. And where is the fisherman who does not expect that to happen the very next time!

But agriculture is a jealous wench and unless strict attention is paid to her she does not give her richest rewards. Farming, by reason of the very wealth of opportunity for other kinds of work, was not progressive. A few who devoted their lives to it and worked intelligently were well off. The land was excellent for mixed farming and shells were available from the oyster beds in the bay and mud from the river. Little interest was taken in new methods in farming. There was no blooded stock in the place and no cooperative attempt to secure any. All had enough to live on though few had what are now considered the comforts, not to say luxuries, of life.

Little attention was given to the appearance of the buildings or to modern conveniences and comforts in the houses. There was a marked absence of shade and fruit trees, shrubbery, fruit bushes and flower and vegetable gardens. Paint was not squandered on the houses and window and door screens were almost unknown. The people were intelligent, good living and industrious.

The parish includes three churches. The largest is at Brunswick; one at Windsor five miles East; and a smaller one at Southend fifteen miles West. Occasionally services are held in an outpost on the coast almost on the ocean ten miles farther West.

The last minister was an old man who had spent forty odd years in this field. He was of the studious type with no practical gifts at all. In spite of all his years of driving he had no notion of how to harness or care for his horse. There had been no progress in the church for years. There was regular preaching service every Sunday at Brunswick, and alternately at the other points in the afternoon. It was the loyalty and devotion of the people to religion that kept the cause alive. There was a live Christian Endeavor society at Brunswick which was now in the hands of efficient leaders all of whom were in early middle life. Sunday schools of the old type but with some excellent teachers and with some real life were carried on in two of the churches and in three public schools, making five in all.

Finally the old and loved minister retired. Following a wise custom of the Scottish church he did not take up his residence in the parish. He welcomed his successor and was always sympathetic though not always able to approve of everything that was undertaken.

The new minister came straight from the theological school. The enthusiasm of youth was a good asset. He loved the country and liked country people. The first aim was to build up the regular congregation. Therefore every morning was sacred to study and he worked hard. In order to keep up his mental discipline he always had some definite course of study in addition to the preparation for preaching. One time it was History; the Holy Roman Empire; The Mediaeval Church; The Oxford Movement; The Social History of Great Britain; at another time it was literature; again church school methods; and so on.

The afternoons were given just as zealously to calling and parish work. The distances were great and autos were not yet used much in that area. Evenings were pretty well taken up with meetings.

Along with the preaching and pastoral work district mid-week meetings were held in four places. These had a varied program of study, including Bible study, worship, and social intercourse.

The greatest opportunity seemed to be among the children and young people. Contact was established with the Sunday School Department of the denomination and with the Sunday School Association. Every effort was made to have their secretaries and workers visit the parish and to have a large number of delegates attend any helpful conference or convention.

There were two needs. It seemed a great shame that the people were not studying farming. Advantage was taken of Government cooperation and of other agencies and a Farmers Institute, including both men and women, was established. This brought lecturers on farming, dairying, canning, etc. Flower seeds were secured for distribution.

Believing in gardens of flowers and fruit, the minister (though the salary was small and he would probably not stay many years) set out a small orchard and fruit bushes and also planted many ornamental shrubs and shade trees, abundance of which were to be found in the woods; fitted the house with screens and had it painted; had the barn moved, and kept everything spotlessly neat and clean. The high fence windbreak and the barn glistened with white-wash.

Another condition which lay heavy on his heart was the prevalence of colds and of tuberculosis. The young people, as part of their services, promoted study and lecture courses and in this way the attention of the people centred on these conditions. The housefly came to be known for what it is and a ceaseless war was waged upon this unclean and obtrusive creature. Swat-the-fly and screens wrought havoc in its ranks.

The manse was open house. Many of the near neighbours had never been in it. Now in that small country parish there were often as many as twelve hundred callers—including guests for meals, meetings, etc.,—in a year.

The minister could not be in the Brunswick Sunday schools which met in the afternoon, but he could meet with the young people in the evening. As soon as he had gained the confidence of the people concerned he talked the matter over with them. Here was a place for the training of these youths. It came about quite naturally that in the next election of officers the old standbys did not accept office even if nominated. The new officers and committees were in charge of the young set though sometimes an older person was on the committee. Now these must not fail for that would set things back worse than ever. They must be trained. So at least once a month the officers and committee leaders met at the manse or parsonage. The president was responsible for plans for their meetings and for their conduct. Each officer and chairman had to bring plans for the next month or quarter. It soon became a regular custom to question every plan presented and thresh it out. Often the one in charge had not thought the details through and over and over again matters were referred back for further study. Sometimes there was great fun at these meetings; and always there were high moments of worship as problems were faced and plans made which seemed to tax the resources of the group. These meetings lasted for several hours taking the whole evening. Light refreshments were always served.

Then the committees needed help. These would seek the minister and time was generously given to them. It usually happened that a number on each new "Cabinet" were quite unlikely material for leadership. They would be self-conscious and "giggely" with little comprehension of what the society stood for. But by the end of the year everyone was serious and thoughtful with a real grasp of some of the essentials of organized religious life, able to lead the group in prayer and quite worthy to be a trusted chairman or officer the following year. In four years' time that one church of some one hundred and twenty members could have provided adequate leaders for three societies.

Among the rules which grew out of these experiences the young people formulated these (a) No officer shall succeed himself unless for some specific reason. This was to prevent one person from being continued in office for years; to prevent a mere routine reelection of all; and to develop the interest of all. (b) At least half of the Cabinet shall be new each year. The young people recognized that one main object of the society was to train its members and they wanted as many as possible to share in responsibility. These two rules aimed also at keeping the group from getting in a rut. (c) Nothing shall be adopted by the Society until presented by the responsible member, after being formulated by his committee, and approved by the Cabinet. This was to centre responsibility and prevent unconsidered and hasty plans from being "sprung" on the group. Any important proposition had also to be thoroughly understood and adopted by the society as a whole before it was acted on. This same general policy was carried out in the other churches also.

The church buildings were in disrepair. By reason of his life and work the minister was soon trusted and respected. After prolonged discussion it was decided to build a new church at Brunswick. There was the usual division of opinion as to location, type of building and cost. But by frank and open facing of all issues the building was erected and equipped, the enterprize arousing the interest of the people and creating a deeper unity. The cash and three year pledges, with a few outside gifts, covered the entire cost.

This also awakened the other sections to a sense of their need. The Windsor church looked like a barn. A wing and little tower were added making it one of the prettiest little churches in that section. The young people in this area, about thirty in number, had never been organized and they were like grains of sand. They lacked cohesion. This characteristic persisted. When the trustees made up their budget for the building fund they ventured to estimate that the young people might raise one hundred dollars. The society did not know this. They discussed what they should undertake. They wanted to do something specific and not simply contribute to the fund. A special meeting was called to decide finally. The minister was present, resolved to guide them as far as his suggestions would go, not to attempt more than they could do. To undertake something big and fail would but increase the usual lack of confidence of the adults. They decided to provide the seats for the church. The cheapest fairly good seats would cost two hundred and fifty dollars. When asked for his advice the minister said they would be satisfactory and that the society should not undertake too much. With some reluctance they so decided. But later they recalled the meeting, reversed the decision and ordered the best, costing over six hundred dollars! In three years it was all paid. It seems clear that when young people are interested they will do many times as much as the wisest adults believe them capable of accomplishing!

The handful of people at Southend were in some ways the most enterprizing of all. They felt that they were but few and each had to do a little more than his share to maintain services at all. Besides they had one or two families who were devoted and very intelligent. With real heroism they remodelled and redecorated the interior of their attractive little church and repaired and painted the outside.

A canvass was made of Brunswick and those who knew it best were surprised to find that there were far more children not in Sunday school than any one had supposed. The value of this survey was deeply impressed on them all. One little section called Scott's Lake where there was a tendency to degeneration and inter-family marriage and where the people were very retiring and seldom came to the church, had twelve children. A neighbourhood school was organized for them, manned for the most part by Brunswick young people and greatly enjoyed by all ages.

But the young minister did not know how to improve the work of religious education. He had had the best training of university and theological seminary but in neither had he received any help in either the principles or practise of educational work. He felt that the buildings, even, might have been better had he been helped to appreciate the essentials of a church plant for religious education and social purposes. He knew that his work could not be permanently successful unless the religious training of children and youth, as well as adults, was on the best basis. He therefore decided to give up several years to this study.

In five years in a rural parish without wealth or specially trained leaders these were some of the things accomplished: An aroused people, intelligently interested in the church's objectives; a keener sense of the possibilities of better farming; an ever increasing percentage of blooded stock provided through cooperation; better painted houses with more flowers, shrubs and trees; new and more beautiful church buildings and a system of systematic giving; the voluntary support of the missionary work of the church; greater acquaintance and friendliness in the parish; awakened interest in lectures, reading, study, art, music through contact with many visiting speakers and personal study; trained leaders, two of whom gave their lives to distinctively religious work; a large increase of new members in full communion, including many young people.

None of these results came without effort. Many times attempts failed. Sometimes things seemed on the verge of disaster. There were times of great stress as well as moments of elation. But whatever happened the minister tried to have every group, whatever it was engaged in to see many greater things still to be done.

The minister realized and has since often pointed out how much better work he could have done had he been helped in the seminary to know how to face the practical situations in the community and in the lives of people. The things that might have been done are greater than what were accomplished.

GROUP B

CHURCHES WITH SOME EFFECTIVE ELEMENTS

11. WINDY RIDGE; A New England Hamlet
12. SILVER FALLS; An American Village
13. CENTERVILLE; A Mid-Western Rural Town
14. COPPERFIELD AND GRANITEVILLE; Open Country Communities
15. MONTGROVE; A Western Country Town

WINDY RIDGE AND SLEEPY HOLLOW

CASE 11

Is a New England township (or town) covering less than forty square miles and supporting a population of about one thousand. Year after year the local records show a gradual decline in numbers and in the acreage tilled. Property values are, however, very high, and during the past five years a large number of summer residents have been attracted to Windy Ridge by its natural beauty,—lakes and valleys and mountains. At present nearly every family is a land owner, the farms being usually some hundred-odd acres. These have been in the possession of the same families for generations, some tracing their original establishment to the seventeenth century. Not one family can claim to have earned its present comfortable economic condition; all are inheritors of estates built up by a vigorous Yankee race. There are only a few foreign people in the town. Families are very small, often childless, there being only one hundred and thirty-five pupils at the "Centre School," to which all are transported, and at high school. One noticeable fact is the absence of a vigorous middle age group. There are children and adults past fifty-five; but few young people and married young couples.

The homes are decidedly attractive, externally, anyway. But frequently the interior is disappointingly neglected and one finds evidence of confusion, inability to keep a house in order and much cluttering of just "things." All have generous book collections, most of which are part of the family treasure; and modern magazines of the higher grade are frequently seen on tables and chairs. There are likely to be also some recent books of the "high brow" variety which are conspicuously displayed. Nearly all housewives seem to have a mania for collecting anything that is old. Often such collections bear no semblance of taste; but lengthy tales are told about each relic in great detail usually introduced by the familiar phrase: "This is what my great-great-grandmother wore when she attended a ball given by General . . . ." The town has eight antique shops and four churches famous for their past. There is a gloating about certain famed people who, at some distant period, graced the political or religious activities in the community. Everybody is related to everybody else, particularly to those who have been successful and prominent. And they are so proud of their traditions that they seem oblivious to the more recent non-achievements of their families. Or is it that the eagerness to display the past is in part a subconscious defence mechanism against the sense of a declining culture?

Within the township of Windy River is Sleepy Hollow a small, slumbering, and very contented group of families on the state road clustered around the post-office, a church two hundred years old, and a store. There are twenty families here and less than twenty children and young people. Sleepy Hollow is so situated that, rightfully, a large proportion of the town of Windy Ridge gravitates toward its centre. The church could minister to four hundred people who reside in this area. All of these are American. Recently a new industry has come into being some three miles away and some new families, renters and labourers, have been attracted there. Here also are nearly fifty children and young people without any religious privileges or attention.

The Sleepy Hollow church also has had an honourable past but that is the most that can be said for it. The meeting house is a large, rather unattractive square building, seating three hundred people, with an adjoining "conference room" for social purposes. Attached to this is a well equipped kitchen. The church school numbers about ten adults. More than once a few children who came were dismissed by the teachers (elderly ladies) because they did not think it was worth while to have a class for only three or four children. Church services average less than twenty-five and the present membership at Sleepy Hollow numbers thirty-two, most of whom are inactive or too feeble to attempt anything progressive.

The minister combines culture, education and personal attractiveness. His wife is equally gifted. The two form an excellent pair and the present, unprogressive state of the church and community is in no way of their making. They arrived two years ago from a nearby field and have resolved to "do or die" at Sleepy Hollow. Unfortunately people have not responded to their urgent appeals for progress. Perhaps their approach was too eager and too hasty for these parishioners who prefer to have things as they always have been. Anyway these leaders have met with several reversals, much to their discouragement. They proposed to consolidate the church school with the one at Windy Ridge centre, some five miles away. Comfortable transportation was available; but the faithful defenders of old traditions rebelled, fearing it would be the first step in eliminating the old, old church at the Hollow. That, in their judgement would be unspeakably tragic. Their sole ambition was to "keep the church open on Sundays."

A proposal to have a vacation church school was at first met with such comments as this: "Why insist upon breaking into a child's vacation time with some more schooling?" Nevertheless the project was carried through much to the surprise of the adults. This school has proven an "ice breaker." A bus was used to transport children from miles away to the church and a fine spirit developed.

Once or twice an effort has been made to have community get-togethers. A committee was duly appointed, but the matter perished there. A change in the order of Sunday school service was seriously objected to also, on the grounds that it "upset" the customary schedule. When a visiting minister supplied the pulpit last summer he was informed that people had enjoyed his gospel sermon so much; they were just "hungry for that kind of preaching." What they really meant was that they wanted dissertations which soothed their minds and left them confirmed in their inactivity. Their minister was in the habit of urging upon them the deeds of Christian life.

Sensing the situation the minister arranged to have a series of special meetings. Nothing startling happened except that a few signs of interest and willingness to move forward began to appear. Three new families were received into the church and these, with a group of young people who are loyal to their pastor and friend, constitute additional reasons for believing that Sleepy Hollow is about to awaken.

It may require several years to materially change conditions. The minister, however, while he has no inclination to surrender or to change pastorates, is inclined to become discouraged and disappointed when plans fail to materialize and the people of Sleepy Hollow fail to move. He has probably made the mistake of not openly talking over all his plans and hopes with the leading members. It was easy to take it for granted that they would disapprove and reject new schemes. Then too, it is evident that an old community like Sleepy Hollow is not likely to change very rapidly. People are comfortable and easy going. There has not been any particular change in two hundred years, and a two year ministry is perhaps too brief to make a dent in traditions as old and stable as that.

Around the village are a number of families who have never been associated with the church at the Hollow. Since the American families are exceedingly small and therefore destined to disappear, the future of the church may hinge upon those who within the next ten years will move into the community. The task of the present pastor is to keep on and to encourage lesser forward steps, hoping in time to overcome this discouraging apathy.

Into this situation enters also the fact that for a generation the church has lacked vigorous leadership in the pulpit. Past ministers have been aged and satisfied to maintain the status quo. Their pastorates were uneventful, limited to preaching and pastoral calling. Innovations have therefore become abominations which seemingly threatened the existing order.

SILVER FALLS

CASE 12

Bordering the banks of one of the most widely known and attractive rivers in the East, lies the town of Silver Falls. It is an unusual rural community, in the sense that here is a comfortable, industrious, well-to-do population of about six hundred which has inherited not only homesteads but more than ordinary culture, and lives peacefully and happily in a slowly changing environment. There are no industries other than farming; and only a limited number of stores and shops because Silver Falls is so close to a growing industrial centre which supplies all its material needs. There are no moving picture houses; no dance halls; no pool rooms; and only one church.

The people are mostly of Protestant faith and the majority of families have been or are connected in one way or another with the local church. Homesteads have remained in the same family for generations and there has been no change in the texture of the population make-up. A good public library is well patronized and the two public schools have commodious quarters and modern equipment. The general intelligence is above average. The contact with city life is close and intimate.

There is, it is true, a small group of leaders who somehow have gotten into political and religious offices though they do not possess either refinement or intellectual ability to lead this high grade country village. They are the noise makers and the "leaders" in town affairs as well as in the church. But since everybody is related to everybody else and the same family names occur a score or more times on the tax list, it does not matter, apparently, for political affairs seldom cause more than a ripple in Silver Falls except at national elections when one hundred percent Americanism becomes evident.

Silver Falls is known for its summer colonies along the river. The population nearly doubles during July and August. A number of road-side markets do a thriving business. These summer residents, however, are of no particular material value to the town since Silver Falls does not provide their food, clothing, or pleasures. Moreover, with numerous hard surfaced roads and the big city just ten miles away there is no immediate need for such catering. Silver Falls is really rural only in the sense that it is located in the country and that it has a small population.

The church occupies a unique position. Situated at the very heart of the village, it stands surrounded by ancient elms, a fine sample of beautiful colonial architecture. Always a source of pride to the inhabitants, its majestic steeple and snow-white walls stand out distinctly against a green background. Few meeting houses are more attractive. To the left of the main building is a modern community house with the usual facilities for suppers and social occasions. Beneath the auditorium is a rather disappointing basement used for church school purposes. The interior of both buildings is of the plain, rather stern type, with a seating capacity of three hundred in the church proper and about one hundred and fifty in the social hall. There is a good organ and piano in the church. Some years ago it was customary to sell the pews. This was done at the annual meeting when the "slips" were auctioned off. The names of pew holders were properly inscribed on the pews and it was against the rules for non-family members to occupy these seats, even though vacant. This practise was abolished some ten years ago. At one time the pulpit stood ten feet or more above the floor, but this too has been altered, the present platform being of ordinary size and appearance. Historically the church has played an important part in the association or conference to which it belongs. Several churches, some of which are now far more prosperous than the mother church, have been established through the Silver Falls parish. Its pastors have had an unusual record of long pastorates, peaceful ministries and years of quiet service.

In the last few years, however, a complete change has come upon the constituency and the policies of the church. This was due altogether to the leadership of one man who guided the destinies of the Silver Falls parish for four years. He came when his particular denomination was in the throes of theological upheavals. Schools and leaders were being branded and labelled and general unrest pervaded the denominational press and ministry. And this man gloried in controversies. He came with the declared intention to "fight." And he did. Sermons were strongly doctrinal, of the stirring type, always defending the "faith of our fathers." He openly attacked institutions and people who did not hold to his particular theology. Being in some respects a gifted and positive leader he succeeded in having the church adopt a creed. It of course embodied his own point of view. New members had to subscribe to it though the church itself belonged to the non-creedal, free churches.

Then followed a deliberate system of indoctrination of young people and children through the church school. At prayer meetings some months later one could hear theological catch phrases and terms used in prayers by young people and even by children under twelve years of age who, it was quite obvious, had no comprehension of their implications. The only Bible used throughout the school was one which had the personal interpretations of a well known teacher indicated by colours and cross references. But all this fitted perfectly into the scheme of the pastor. A few members objected, somewhat feebly, but soon discovered that they too were labelled as disloyal to the "Word of God."

The church, however, prospered for a time. Congregations were fairly large and the total number of communicants ran as high as three hundred and fifty. Prayer meetings and the church school were well attended. There was a glorious feeling abroad for the Silver Falls church enjoyed being "true" and "loyal" to what it had come to believe to be the correct interpretation of "God's book." Everything seemed to be going along wonderfully well when one day the shock came. The minister resigned, accepting a call to another parish.

By his policy and practise he was "the whole show" himself. He had not attempted to train independent thinkers and leaders. What he did was to deny the right of personal independence and judgement. When he left the unsound edifice tumbled down.

Then began the trying task to find a successor who would fit into the scheme of things. This proved a very unhappy undertaking. In the first place only so many seminaries and schools were listed as "safe." Man after man who really possessed ability and Christian faith was dismissed from further consideration the moment the pulpit committee learned that he was a graduate of a suspected school or that he varied one iota from the accepted creed of the Silver Falls church. Strangely enough the men who seemed to satisfy the church's doctrinal requirements were easily labelled by the congregation as "uneducated," "a bit crude" or "not quite the quality we want."

Eighteen months passed. Supplies came from everywhere but no agreement could be reached. Finally a good majority favoured the calling of a pastor but a vigorous minority let it be known that they would not approve or attend if he were chosen. That settled that. Then someone who "loved the old church" recommended a man who was "just right." He came. He resigned after less than two years on the field, having found it impossible to "become all things to all men" doctrinally. But the church persisted in insisting that the first qualification of the next pastor should be that he accept their creed as it stood. Denominational state officials were not even consulted. Indeed the pulpit committee felt that they too were "liberal." Neither were the most intelligent people in the church and community given an opportunity to aid the pulpit committee. It was a closed affair. Results were disastrous. Having failed to provide leadership the pastorless church found its program and people slipping. Meanwhile the denomination was undergoing a change. Cooperation came to be considered an essential and there was a new stress on the belief that every man had a perfect right to worship God according to the dictates of his own heart, as indeed the founders of this sect had declared. Thinking people in the community were changing too and the spirit of tolerance and good-will crept in, even into the Silver Falls church. But this precipitated more trouble. And some families withdrew from active participation in any religious services.

A call was finally extended to an elderly man, hopelessly beyond the years of rendering this rare community the full rounded service that it called for. But he came without having been asked to sign the creed or to state where he stood theologically. The church had come to see that a pastor, any kind of a pastor, was essential to its life. And their choice is probably not as hopeless as it may seem at first sight because this new leader harbours no ill will, preaches no controversy or antagonism, but a gospel abounding in good-will, forgiveness and love. He cannot be expected to become a vigorous leader or to respond to the remarkable opportunities the Silver Falls church has in this community; but he will no doubt heal the wounds caused by a leader who gloried in his own ideas and succeeded in swaying the majority of the adult congregation to his particular point of view.

It may be that another generation will have to pass before a new spirit can breathe within this proud and stately church. The tragedy if measured by the number of young people and children directly and indirectly influenced by the wranglings within a Christian church is great indeed. And some of the best families during the past ten years, repelled and disgusted by the spirit of the church, have been deprived of the religious nurture and fellowship to which they were entitled.

CENTERVILLE

CASE 13

This is a western village of less than five hundred people. There are several general stores, a harness shop, postoffice, two garages, railway station and three churches. People are dependent on farms and incidental day labour for a living. Some of the families are tenant farmers, renting, not owning their farms. Centerville is a good trading centre. On Saturdays the population increases to nearly double its number. Some years ago this was a busy saw-mill town which seemed destined to prosper indefinitely. Forests were soon depleted and lumber camps and mills were compelled to seek unexploited regions. This seriously hindered business progress. Two of the banks closed and a number of amusement places sold out. Property could be bought for less than half the listed value five years ago. Now the population neither increases nor diminishes. Main street is unpaved and there are no sidewalks worthy of the name save on one side of the main thoroughfare. For "big" trading, people drive to Hinson, nine miles away, a city of four thousand population.

Today Centerville depends chiefly upon the surrounding farming population. In recent years diversified farming has been introduced. Every farmer keeps a good sized herd of cattle, and also pigs and chickens. Feed stuff is locally produced. The soil is rich and yields good crops without much artificial stimulation. Occasional droughts cause temporary anxiety but real crop failures are almost unheard of in this fertile region of the Central West.

Homes are commodious and supplied with modern equipment of every description. Every family owns a car and roads are almost perfect. Dairy barns are modern and farm implements are of the best available type. There are no poor people. Even the tenant farmers, who are comparatively few in the section, seem well provided with essentials. Land values are high and few farms are available at any figure.

People are of American and Scandinavian origin. They are thrifty, dependable and seriously religious. Their church loyalties are freely expressed and proven. They are intelligent and aware of modern trends socially and economically. Their reading matter consists of the daily paper, agricultural bulletins which they study with great care, rural periodicals, a magazine or two and denominational papers. Their sons and daughters are being educated in high schools and state colleges. Many have become teachers. Agricultural agents and ministers find a hearty welcome everywhere. People are cordial and friendly. These people constitute the main support of the churches at Centerville. They attend in a body,—father, mother, children and old folks—and remain for Sunday school and church. The church is their social centre and place of contact with neighbours and friends. Three churches are referred to here which are designated as 13a, 13b and 13c.

13a. Of the three Protestant churches at Centerville one is about to surrender. This church ministers to a small group of Scandinavian people who are fully Americanized. Theoretically it remains a Swedish church. It is a member of a Swedish conference and deals only indirectly with its American sister churches. But on the bulletin board outside the church the word "Swedish" has been crossed out. Neither the children of the parish nor the pastor converse in the foreign tongue. All services are in English except for an adult Bible class conducted by a lay-teacher. This class constitutes the main reason for maintaining the church at all. Others are willing and in some cases eager to unite with the other churches in the community. Year after year, however, superiors continue to appoint a pastor to this struggling little church which has long since outgrown its usefulness.

13b. The second church is in definite competition with both the others. Its history extends back to the early days of revivals in the West. And it maintains to the present day a reputation of being "evangelistic." It thrives on special meetings. Last May (1929) marked the fourth series within a year. These meetings are characterized by excitement and high pressure emotionalism.

Increase in membership or giving has been remarkably slow. Many of the converts repeat their public confessions once or twice each year. "Hitting the trail" has become a habit. As compared to the number of members in 1926 when the present pastor arrived there has been an increase from seventy-nine to ninety-six communicants. But allowance must also be made for the loss of several names which were dropped when the roll was revised. Gradually the magic of revivals is losing its power.

The church pays its pastor fourteen hundred dollars a year and has no parsonage. But visiting evangelists have undoubtedly reaped a generous harvest. The man who was there in the spring collected one hundred dollars a week and the people contributed a "gift of love" to his wife who had aided through singing. The minister's wife who labours diligently from year to year, teaches a class in Sunday school and leads the choir has never been remembered with any gift.

The minister's sole idea of the church's task is that of "soul winning." By this he means that people come forward, make a public confession, and are properly entered on the church's roll. There is no effort at all to enlist the services of these people and the majority are lost sight of in short order. When asked about the program of his church he, too, thought the reference was to the Order of Service Sunday morning! He frankly admitted that "ringing door bells" and "teaching kids" was not his job. He was called to preach! As for social service, creating a happy Christian spirit through gatherings in homes and schools, or being concerned in the pressing needs and problems of a town like Centerville, these were anathema; for "What have they to do with saving souls?"

This leader is rather unattractive, coarse in manner and speech. But he is unquestionably earnest. His training through correspondence courses came from a "Bible School" in the East. His sermons are usually taken from books of sermons without ever giving credit to the authors. But there is no awareness of guilt. He has repeatedly attacked the pastor of the third church which sponsors a well rounded Christian program. Among the citizens of Centerville he has a small following consisting chiefly of the people who respond to emotional appeals. He walks about with an air of superiority stimulated by the sense of his own religiousness. He would not condescend to appear at suppers and social gatherings in any church. He is certain that he is on the "side of the Lord" and that all who differ are not.

13c. The third church in Centerville fills a larger place in the community. It has an attractive building and a membership of one hundred and eighty-three. Church services are well attended averaging about two hundred and the Sunday school enrolment numbers about one hundred and fifty. Several of the most prosperous farmers and business men hold responsible offices here. The first Friday of each month is "Church Night" when all else is given up for an enjoyable evening which combines a supper at 6 P. M.; study period, teacher training class and young people's meeting between seven and eight o'clock; followed by a combination worship and devotional half hour in which some group usually has a responsible part. These profitable evenings attract over one hundred people regularly.

The church school is well graded and efficiently guided by a council. A thriving young people's organization not alone carries on its own program but shares in making the church night and Sunday services suitable for all ages. A splendid class of men is found in the Sunday school as well as a group of adult women. The minister's wife fills a large place in this active church. She guides the Primary department in all its activities and leads a "Go to Church Band" during the worship hour Sunday morning. Her home is the centre of many joyous occasions and her voice is a distinct addition to the church's choir.

The pastor himself is well liked by all. This is proven by the unusual number of calls he receives for pastoral service. He is one preacher who does not accept fees for any services rendered at weddings or funerals. One secret of his success is sane leadership. There have been no high pressure campaigns for members or money. Evangelism begins in the Sunday school and runs right through the entire program. The evident purpose of all social affairs is to increase Christian fellowship and to enable men, women and young people to share the abundant life with Christ.

Additions in membership have been normally consistent. Giving has steadily increased. Applicants for membership are trained in a special class before being admitted. Often the pastor has been singled out for attacks by the minister of the other church. These he has ignored. By steadfast serenity and awareness of his larger task he has proven himself a true Christian.

This minister has a well organized library. It is well catalogued and indexed thus making easy access to any material possible. It includes a fair selection of non-religious works by well known writers and a fine selection of poetry. He has for several summers supplemented his seminary work by taking summer courses. Through his efforts several young people have attended summer schools for religious education. His pastoral care and service radiate far and wide. He seeks to serve mankind.

COPPERFIELD AND GRANITEVILLE

CASE 14

Copperfield is a tiny village in the open country. Graniteville is similar to it. The two churches are supplied by one minister residing at the latter place. Both are but two or three miles from the state road. All the other roads are unpaved, and practically impassable for autos for some weeks in spring and fall. The people are isolated, some of the women especially having seldom been outside of the community. There are about twenty-five families in Copperfield and sixty in Graniteville. All are farmers. The chief crop is tobacco. There is some dairy farming, the milk being sent to the nearest town. The trading centre is sixteen to nineteen miles from each village. There are several small one-room schools scattered throughout the district.

The communicants in the former church numbered twenty-five and in the latter sixty-five, of whom less than half show any constant, dependable interest in the church. A group of five or six people felt that the church must be revived and were willing to do anything possible to this end.

The Sunday school at Copperfield met immediately after the church and consisted of eight to ten adults. The Ladies' Aid held an occasional supper for revenue only. There is no public library, lodge or other social agency in this place.

In addition to the church and nearby public school Graniteville has a parish house. There is no public library here either. A number have radios and get daily papers. The church school numbered twenty-three, and there was also a young people's meeting of the old fashioned Christian Endeavor type in the evening. The Ladies' Aid raised most of the small budget. During the summer prayer meetings were sometimes held in farm houses. There were no social clubs or agencies of any kind. Occasionally a church supper to get money or a Sunday school entertainment was held.

One other great handicap in these communities was the presence of what may be called feuds. When a feud was on either faction was sure to withdraw from church attendance or anything else that was being undertaken if the other continued its support. Usually there were two or more families on "the outs."

The minister was a man who seemed to be old in body and in mind. His appearance suggested that his arteries had begun to harden at an early (chronological) age and his mental and social attitudes confirmed this impression. He did not read books except a few old commentaries; he did not know that the whole world was different from what it had been when he was young; he never dreamed that there could be any change in religious thinking or in Bible interpretation. His wife belonged to the same school of thought. They did little visiting and what they did do was not always particularly helpful. The salary from both places was eight hundred dollars, and it was seldom paid in full. Naturally this minister had to supplement his income.

This he did by raising chickens and vegetables. His appearance was that of a city day-labourer.

In this beautiful country side a number of visitors spent the summer but even if interested there was nothing to attract them to these churches. With such leadership the churches could scarcely be expected to live, let alone progress.

But help did come. A director of religious education was secured by the denomination for a half dozen of its country churches over a sweep of fifty miles of territory. Budgeting her time carefully she was able to be in these two churches one Sunday out of four, and several week-days a month. She instituted training classes for teachers and prospective teachers, meeting monthly, and arranged to have some of them visit better church schools. Some said they had never before been in any other school. She also gave a great deal of time to personal conferences with each teacher and officer, talking over teaching plans and problems and supplying, as occasion seemed fitting, some interesting pamphlet or chapter of a book for her to read. Through the help of the State Council of Religious Education one-day conferences were held which brought great inspiration, stimulus and practical help to the teachers and to the whole constituency.

The church vacation school offered a point of approach. After careful consideration and planning step by step with her few workers, vacation schools were arranged in such a way that she could spend a session a week in each. The children were delighted and in every centre some local leaders responded quite splendidly. The success of these schools gave a great impetus to teachers and pupils for the regular Sunday school work which began the next season with many more in attendance and with a much better spirit.

One day a young girl who helped in the vacation school at Graniteville asked the director if the few older pupils might form a club. A sympathetic leader was secured. The group was called together. They arranged to meet twice a month and to include boys and girls. They decided they would need hymn books and, having no funds, each agreed to buy his own copy. Some of the questions they wanted to discuss were: What does it mean to "join the church"? What is the Communion Service and what is its value? (Only three of the twelve had ever seen the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.) What is God like? What is the good of prayer? Besides discussion they wished to have worship, recreation and service. The characteristics of the life of one who became a member of the church in full communion drawn up by these young people included clean speech, clean living, reverence, helping others, happiness, followers of the Way of Life. Not a few of these pupils often walked four or five miles to the club meetings, the members assuming in turn responsibility for fires, leadership and refreshment.

The director also arranged to have special speakers such as returned missionaries, people who had travelled, Farm Bureau secretaries and others to lecture. These often used stereopticon slides. She conducted what might be called demonstration socials where dainty refreshments, nicely decorated tables, fun provoking games and a good social time left their own impress and ministered to a richer community and church life.

At Copperfield the interest first developed among parents of little children. Their request was gladly acceded to and a mothers' class held. The director met the class every month and was able to get leaders from the city some twenty miles distant to lead the class for an alternate meeting each month.

It is with regret but yet necessary to record that in this work the director not only had no help from the minister but was actually hindered by him. The reasons were perhaps defence of what he considered "the faith" and perhaps partly jealousy. The needs in the communities were great, but the church was doing nothing to meet them, was indeed not even aware of them. The minister preached sermons that were unrelated to life. Had he sensed the needs he would have been quite impotent to meet the situations. In both respects these churches seem to be typical of hundreds of others.

Besides the difficulty due to the lack of cooperation and constructive leadership on the part of the minister is the lack of constant touch with each place by the director because of having so many churches to serve. But the success achieved by this director in several churches suggests that this is one means of bringing real help to small churches. It is of course obvious that the smaller the number of churches under one director the more intensive and fruitful will be the service rendered. If the denominations could see what an effective form of home missions such work is, funds would probably be available for many such directors in many sections of the country.

MONTGROVE

CASE 15

Out in the open spaces of the fertile West lies Montgrove. It is a town with a population of fourteen hundred and is the county seat. This adds greatly to its prestige and importance. When court convenes the four business streets which surround the court house, square fashion, are crowded with automobiles from miles around. This is especially true when important cases are being tried. Saturdays also are busy days and the many drygoods, shoe and grocery merchants seem to prosper. There are always several "sales" going on which attract a multitude, mostly farmers and their families. The local high school and public schools are filled with nearly five hundred husky, vigorous youngsters, all children of American stock. There are only a few Negroes, and scattered Scandinavian families in the community. Land values travelled skyward during and shortly after the World War and have never receded. Farm homes are uniformly attractive, modern and well painted; and are usually surrounded by a cluster of shade trees. The people have recently shifted from strictly grain to diversified farming and apparently profited thereby. Montgrove serves as their distributing centre and trading place; here is their banker and butcher; clubs and social life.

Unlike so many Central-Western communities Montgrove is not over-churched. There are but three, all told, two of which are Protestant. The Roman Catholic population is said to number five hundred. Their church is by all odds the most attractively built and impressive in appearance; so is the nearby parish house. There are cheerful arrangements of flowers and shrubbery and the surrounding lawns are well cared for. One of the Protestant churches has a splendid house of worship, a brick building which for some reason, during recent years, has been neglected. But there is plenty of room and ideal arrangements for classrooms, and departmental work. A worshipful auditorium seats three hundred and fifty people. This church has a membership of three hundred and eighty-five and is well attended. The church school which meets after the morning service enrolls two hundred children and young people. It is easy to see that here is a church with great possibilities and a wealth of potential leadership among its lay members.

The minister, however, is a distinct disappointment. Having reached the retiring age, he is merely "holding on" as he expressed it, "ready at any time to step aside for a younger man." But the church, while it feels the urgent need of a change, seems charitably inclined to keep the old pastor who came to them five years ago, out of retirement, "just to please the folks." One report was that when a certain official approached the minister and suggested that the time had probably come for a younger man to enter the field there, seeing its many needs and urgent calls for vigorous leadership, the old gentleman rebelled and preached a sermon on "The Age of the Aged" drawing illustrations from such striking cases as the lives of Clemenceau, Hindenburg, Elihu Root, Edison, Burbank and Rockefeller. That settled it for the time being.

The disappointment increases when one learns that in no way does the pastor lead his people. The church is what it is in spite of the minister. There are rare and energetic local leaders continually promoting community and world wide interests, frequently without as much as consulting their pastor. But there are great gaps in the program. The two hundred church school scholars all assemble in the main auditorium for "opening exercises" which are exactly that. They return again for a fifteen minute "closing period" when detailed reports, names, collection results and teachers present are hastily read while nobody cares. Thus fully thirty-five minutes of a precious fifty minute session are spent in more or less perfunctory routine of little value. There is always a long list of announcements and much confusion when classes assemble and reassemble. And all this although there is equipment well suited for departmentalization. There are no teachers' meetings except just before Easter and Christmas when the season's "program" is considered. The pastor has no part in the church school. There is an adult class of women but not for men, though the congregation numbers from thirty to thirty-five male attendants each Sunday.

A fine group of young people are fortunate in having eager and able leadership. But even here the meetings are of value chiefly because of their social contacts. The subjects are not a part of their life interests but chosen for them by a monthly "young people's" paper. Comments upon the theme are read from this publication, someone prays, then they sing a hymn or two and go out, having no interest in the church service. The minister comes in occasionally and is referred to as "the old man." Everybody straightens up when he enters and returns to normal behaviour when he departs. The children have eager and consecrated women and girls as teachers. All these leaders need is intelligent guidance and helpful suggestions.

The women are indefatigable workers and provide suppers and social occasions several times during the year. But there is a lack of cohesion and unity due altogether to lack of leadership. These suppers and socials are always for the purpose of "raising money" for the church, although the pastor's salary is small and the annual budget including missionary giving is only twenty-five hundred dollars. Now and then there are special "drives" when more than the usual number of eatfests are held. They have also gotten into the habit of "surprising" a great many folk on various occasions like birthdays, wedding anniversaries and so on, often imposing upon already strained pocket books and the good-will of givers for some suitable gift.

In the pulpit the pastor is a fair but stern preacher. He often grows quite familiar with the congregation, calls someone by his first name and relates a detailed story of no consequence. His study is most untidy. Unopened letters, unread books and periodicals, correspondence a year or more old lies cluttered upon his desk. There is a large but very musty library and he subscribes for three weekly religious papers though not one probably is ever read. His books are mainly "sets" of sermons, "expository"

Bibles of aged appearance, and weighty volumes of theology. But the aging warrior moves about with a hesitant step and does not seem to care particularly, repeating again and again the statement: "When they want a younger man I won't stand in the way."

Here then is a church with splendid people, good equipment, "strategically" located and supplied with all ages of people happy and eager to share in the work. It could minister to three small, open country churches, all located within a radius of five miles and thus could be in the township of Montgrove what the business community is materially, namely the centre of its moral and religious interests.

The other Protestant church has a much smaller membership and lacks everything: equipment, leadership, money, people, and program. Here another inactive preacher holds forth being returned to Montgrove from year to year by superior advisors. This church plays no vital part in community life and does not pretend to. It has, however, its own constituency, composed mainly of humbler people who come because of habit and because they "hate to give up" the old church. There is ample room for two Protestant churches in Montgrove.

Last summer certain travelling evangelists had a "rousing good revival" at Montgrove. They pitched their own tent in a lot near the centre and preached the "full gospel" with conviction and no uncertainties. Sermons were realistic. One about "The Lord's Washday" was closely "related" to modern life by the actual use of clothes lines, pins, dirty clothing, electrical washing machines and wringers. Another one on

"Judgement Day" was illustrated by a burning charcoal pit on one side and a timid looking angel on the right who carried a sign "Bliss or Blisters?" The evangelist was advertised as the "greatest gospel preacher of the modern age." The response to this "full gospel" preaching was that the tent was well filled every evening for two months.

Local churches neither opposed nor approved of these meetings. Just how great the financial returns were no one could tell; but since collections were a part of the "worship" program preliminary to the preaching each evening, there is no reason to doubt their generousness.

These preachers of the "full gospel" returned to Montgrove a few months later ostensibly for the purpose of locating permanently in the town. If this plan materializes it will add tremendously to the religious problem in the community since the new organization would draw almost altogether from families already connected with one of the three local churches now operating in Montgrove. In some cases it would undoubtedly divide groups and families and create delicate situations in many homes. Thus the "full gospel" may become the means of dividing and injuring peace and good-will.

GROUP C

THE LESS EFFECTIVE CHURCHES

21. LINDSEY; A Western Country Town
22. RENARD; A "Foreign" Rural District in the Northwest
23. FORSYTHE; An Open Country Parish
24. MINTERVILLE; A Mid-Western Rural Town
25. TRIPLE RIVER; An American Village Community

CASE 21

Far out on the Western plains in the immense farming areas typical of the wheat belt, lies Lindsey a comparatively new town, with a population of eighteen hundred, several three story brick structures, several banks, hotels, a railroad junction, and railroad shops. Main street is particularly impressive, bordered by paved sidewalks, busy stores and lined with automobiles. It measures fully one hundred and seventy-five feet across and is hard surfaced for a mile in each direction. The railroad shops and the other industries pour into Lindsey a generous payroll twice a month. There is a high school and a consolidated public school which cares for the educational preparation of all the children within an area of forty-five square miles.

Lindsey is the social and recreational centre for close to twenty-five hundred people and there are seven churches. There is a cooperative farmers' exchange, creamery and grange and thriving 4 H Clubs for boys and girls. Local authorities estimate that there are no less than thirty distinct organizations at work in the community, including County Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A., W. C. T. U., Grange, several Lodges, (three of which own private halls), seven churches, (each one having several sub-organizations), Boy Scouts, Salvation Army, Rotary, Civic and Exchange Clubs, Agricultural associations, Girl Scouts, Boys'

Band, American Legion, Women's Auxiliaries, and athletic clubs. It was reported that every able bodied and able moneyed man and woman belongs on the average, to eight distinct organizations and pays for the privilege accordingly. This rural town is every whit modern in "things going on" and the numerous calls for contributions and endless urges to attend this and that affair.

The seven churches are quite ineffective. Their combined church attendance does not exceed five hundred and the total enrolment in the five church schools, two of the churches not having any, runs about four hundred. Some of the most regular church attendants come from Clear Springs, three miles south, a small centre, and from two or three similar clusters of farm homes. The people in Lindsey do not attend in great numbers. Nor are the business leaders and professional men very regular. The state has established a normal school at Lindsey—two miles away to be exact—which enrolls several hundreds of students who are not counted as "residents" of Lindsey. They come and go of course; but faculty members reside in town and are the choicest leaders available to the churches. And the majority are very faithful.

There never has been nor is there now any successful project in church cooperation. Once a plan of combining for Sunday evening services was attempted but failed mainly because one minister objected too strenuously. Then several combined teacher training courses were tried but were finally given up through lack of hearty support of the churches. At present each church goes about its task as though there did not exist another similar agency in the world.

The church which is the subject of this study is one of the largest in membership. The building is deplorable. No bulletin board or sign indicates name or time of services. The exterior is in serious disrepair. Though surrounded by well cared for homes and situated in a residential section of the town its own message is that of dismay and gloom. The belfry appears dangerously near toppling over and several small stained glass window sections are missing. The building itself is neither attractive nor practical. There is a large assembly hall, theatre-like, crowded with creaky folding chairs. Hymn books and torn Bibles are found everywhere, loaded on the piano, pulpit, floor, under chairs and in the sloping aisles. Water marks caused by a leakage somewhere in the roof have stained the south side of the ceiling and wall. The lighting is poor and tastelessly arranged. There is a gloomy, dusty, damp basement made somewhat more unpleasant by scattered tables, chairs, hymnals, Sunday school papers, periodicals, and forgotten wearables. All in all it is unfit to be called a "house of worship." There are two large classrooms which may also be used for social occasions; a crowded kitchen; and a heating plant. The kitchen stove is badly corroded and the dishes, stored upon some unprotected shelves, are covered with dust.

But this church boasts great evangelical fervour. Its pastor is a well known and popular evangelist. In the church school "nothing but the Bible" is used as a text book. All ages study the same passage in the same way. Teachers receive weekly instruction from the pastor for twenty minutes prior to the midweek prayer meeting. That constitutes their preparation for teaching, both as to material and method. Though ostensibly a strong denominational church it does not co-operate with the national organization or contribute one dollar to missionary service through denominational channels. Yet it loudly proclaims itself true to the specific brand of "principles" held generally by this evangelical denomination. Much of the preaching has been anti-this and anti-that. It is decidedly a church built upon controversy.

A few years ago the minister openly attacked the theories taught at the local state normal school. It so happens that the pastor himself did not graduate from a high school or a seminary. Neither did he undertake to get the facts as to what was actually taught at the normal school. He simply assumed—and attacked. This led to the withdrawal of several valuable members, some of them teachers at the state school. But through his controversies the pastor succeeded in attracting others. He was positive, militant and dogmatic. Hearers got the impression that he was a genuine leader. The membership for a time increased; then subsided. Gradually controversial subjects became tiresome to the people and lost their drawing power. Then came weird "expository" preaching on doctrinal subjects. This too proved of temporary attractiveness.

The main task of this church as stated by the pastor is to "save souls" and by that is distinctly understood salvation from eternal pain to eternal bliss. This is to be accomplished mainly through preaching and praying and indoctrination through the Bible school. There is no great concern for any actual, every day problems in living. There is a narrow ethical note and a shallow moral urge in the preaching. Worship is the singing of gospel songs, often whipped up into stirring two-step or waltz time. This comprizes the main element in the much advertized "popular evening services." People may be seen swaying, keeping time with the orchestra which furnishes the accompaniment. Quite a number keep time with their feet and shoulders. There is an atmosphere of "enjoyment"—not unlike that in a modern dance hall—and song after song is thus "pepped up" until the spirit of the gathering is disposed to approve any "stunt" in the pulpit and this it is frequently called upon to do.

The minister is attractive in manner and appearance. He has the air of one who "runs the show" and enjoys being the centre of attention. He has a deep, soft voice and uses excellent English except when, in moments of "spiritual fervour" he addresses God alternately as "Thou" and "You," and gets utterly confused in "Thou didst" and "You done it." He is the best dressed preacher in Lindsey and has a lot of friends among the less cultured. His pastorate has been a long and a turbulent one filled with "crusades" against various "evils." And he is a hard, earnest pastoral worker. But he deliberately opposes any plans of cooperation among church members and churches and now and then also preaches against it. Local ministers say they cannot understand him nor can they persuade him to enter their monthly get-together when neighbouring pastors drive in for a friendly discussion and exchange of ideas and fellowship.

For this reason this leader of a rather vigorous church has gradually come to be regarded with suspicion by many civic leaders who would like to see greater church cooperation. He is creating a serious community problem. Several people have left his church and oppose his methods. This to the pastor is only an added evidence that he is serving the Lord. For according to his own words, "persecution and many enemies are a sure sign that you are seriously Christian. Did not Paul and Peter experience both?" To consult other men's opinions and to view the experiences of others and profit thereby is the farthest from his desire. To read what able writers have produced or to approach a book which differs from his own point of view would be a waste of time. No denominational aids, bulletins, or papers get beyond the waste paper basket. Official representatives have been repulsed so often that they no longer attempt any cooperative efforts. This man glories in his independence and has succeeded in completely alienating the loyalties of his followers from the world wide task of a progressive denomination.

CASE 22

Renard is a prosperous Northwestern rural community which has undergone complete change during the past fifteen or twenty years. A generation ago not a single European had arrived and older residents tell even now, of going miles to see the first Russian to come to Renard. The population has remained stationary for three generations, numbering about eight hundred people; but now fully seventy percent are of foreign birth. They are principally Russians, Finns and Poles of the labourer type, given to hard work, isolation and independent action. The Russians and Finns are frequently communistic and have their own societies and organizations limited to their own group. Many of them, however, especially among the Finns and the Poles, are highly intelligent and good reasoners. They observe their national occasions with considerable enthusiasm, some drinking and free spending. All are hard workers, many are thrifty and have succeeded in reestablishing a semblance of order upon the small farms they purchased through an agency in New York City. Most of them came to Renard destitute, friendless and without any assurance of daily bread. In a few years they have become quite independent, are known to pay their bills and to be good workers in the furniture and railroad "tie" plants in the community. Farming continues to be one of the principal sources of income, the land being fertile and the natural advantages numerous.

Within the past five years several large poultry plants have been established which are apparently prosperous. To these farms come the Farm Bureau agents who report most cordial reception everywhere. The people seem eager to cooperate and to follow the judgement of agricultural and poultry specialists, their hen houses and yards being models of cleanliness and modern appliances. All have families of good proportions often numbering five to eight children. These are crowding the five district schools and have become honour students at Cleat's high school, fourteen miles away, to which they are transported free of cost. School buildings are exceptionally cheerful, airy and surrounded by ample play grounds.

The community of Renard has, however, not undergone a great change religiously or politically. Long before the arrival of the Europeans, the natives had arrayed themselves into several factions. There were centres of population usually near the local school houses and the people of one district were often bitterly antagonistic to other districts within the township. Political matters were especially divisive, the leaders seeking to array one group against the other to their own advantage. In some cases families had not been on speaking terms for several decades. But as intermarriages were taking place, minor differences were eliminated in the course of time until there remained but two major political parties in the community. These, however, ruled the day. And when the Russians and the Finns arrived shrewd political bosses used their ways and means to "make them citizens" and secure their vote. Gradually the foreigners assimilated the spirit of the community but in some cases they kept free from local quarrels and resolutely walked their own paths.

The only church at Renard could not escape being in almost perpetual turmoil because the two political bosses were deacons and contributed freely to the support of the church. They had also on many occasions, especially around election time, refused to serve the communion bread and wine as they were expected. If one was willing the other objected and remained at home.

But another "historic" quarrel continually threatened the peace and harmony of the church. Some twenty years ago the church was altogether a "one family" affair. This family was everything. Then as some of the more aggressive members died or moved to other communities the children and the grandchildren lost "possession." In the course of time the Renard church became really democratic, but certain members of the ruling family were so situated financially and officially that the church had to recognize their desires and wishes. To this a good many objected and whenever such objections appeared on the surface it meant explosions. The church leaders, however, would not admit that there were any dissensions and maintained that the Renard church was a united, harmonious family.

But the actual state of affairs was a matter of common knowledge among the people and a favourite topic in many homes and had its inevitably harmful influence. Church members really were not different from the unchurched and all knew it. They hated and loved whomsoever they chose with as much ardour as the supposedly non-Christians. They were no friendlier or more peace loving. Traditional prejudices obscured clear thinking and so, for many years while the new citizens were arriving, the church was too occupied either to observe the change or rightly to understand its implications.

When the number of the foreign born became so self-evident through the rapidly increasing children and the babel of tongues heard everywhere and the church found its own membership reduced to under sixty, then the import of the change began to dawn and the future of the church began to be questioned. Henceforth reports to the annual conference were exaggerated "reasons" why the Renard church had failed and explanations of the utter impossibility of "converting these foreigners" since they were all non-Christian and some were "even atheists." No efforts of any sort were actually made to meet the new conditions or to be friendly with the new people. This was partly due to the type of leaders and partly to the conditions described as existing both within and without the church.

In fourteen years ten ministers had come and gone. Four of these remained at Renard less than two years; three were moral failures; and the last one a fraud. He came to the church through his own correspondence. He had forwarded "excellent testimonials" and furnished several "high grade" references, all of which the church failed to verify, assuming that anyone who claimed to be a minister was perfectly reliable. In the past, whenever the politico-ecclesiastical imbroglio became critical, the pastors sounded a prompt retreat and usually found it convenient to transfer to another parish, in response no doubt to a "call from God." Their preaching did not begin to relate itself to the local problem which was, in the meantime, growing decidedly acute. They were evasive and most people knew it. It was much more convenient to cast about for a better field than to wrestle bravely with a situation which required statesmanship.

But the new leader announced he had come to stay. As a matter of fact he held on for two years and seven months, the last year being one of inactivity and idleness. Within six months after his arrival he called half of the men by their first names and all the young women and girls "sister." His appearance was slovenly. The Renard church pays a good salary there being an endowment fund netting over one thousand dollars annually, and several liberal contributors. Yet this "man of God" was perhaps the most ill-clad, untidy and careless dresser in the community. There was always a bulging shirt line visible between vest and trousers; collars, when worn, lasted two weeks or more; and shaves were undoubtedly days and days apart. His teeth were most repulsive, uncared for and decayed. Frequently visitors calling at the parsonage would be received by the pastor dressed in loose hanging trousers, slippers and undershirt, a pair of dirty suspenders supporting the visible underwear and shabby pants.

What probably hurt this pastor more than anything else was his habit of telling questionable stories to the men. When he called upon the Finns, Poles and Russians and had the opportunity, this was his way to "get next to them." When he finally left the church it was discovered that he had "worked" a number of residents for loans though his income was better than that of the majority.

His training was fair. He was a graduate of a standard seminary and had been an honour student in high school. But he lacked judgement in personal matters and had few qualifications as a religious leader. During this pastorate the foreign problem was recognized and frequently talked about but no constructive plan was suggested or new idea evolved, nor was any serious attempt made to meet the local situation. Yet the pastor claimed to "know the field" and its needs. Much of his time was spent in his home where a diligent and very energetic wife cared for four children. She was also a teacher of Beginners, sang in the choir and was president of the Ladies' Aid.

During this pastorate church attendance slumped to the lowest level in many years, though the minister was considered a good preacher. He had a deep sanctimonious voice and uttered the simplest, often most meaningless phrases with a profound intonation suggesting depth of thought and weight of authority. He had on several occasions said that the preacher was "a man of God" and that the "pulpit was his sacred throne." The church school closed for the summer months when much might have been accomplished. Vacation Schools had been "read about," but that was all.

The reason he could not do anything in that community, the preacher had remarked more than once, was because there were no young people or children there. Somewhat later, when a careful study was made of that very section it was found that there were sixty-four young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four and of these at least thirty were in high school. By actual count it was determined that there were no less than two hundred and ninety-six children in the several district schools.

As for entering these splendid homes whose children were the hope and the promise of a new day, and sharing in some friendly way the problems of these new Americans, that just did not seem to enter the mind of people or pastor. The schoolhouses were wide open in the sense that any minister could call there and become acquainted; a few miles to the south was the village of Viborg, a Finnish colony, where no religious work had ever been attempted; and nine miles to the Northeast was another hamlet unusually rich in young life. All these were totally neglected. Strangely enough, when the pastor got ready to leave, he had no difficulty at all in securing a good church and a good salary through any number of "fine references."

CASE 23

Forsythe is a scattered, open country parish. The church has a membership of one hundred and forty-five while the community (including the village where it is located) numbers some four hundred souls. It is a Western prairie town situated in a river valley a good fifty miles from the nearest large trading centre. Many of the homes and occupations have never passed the pioneer stage. Houses are small and for the most part mere shacks. It is a dry farming area which means no irrigation, little rainfall, and frequent crop failures. As a matter of fact there are no heavy crops in this area. Herds of sheep and cattle roam the prairies which are dry and unfruitful. By a good year is usually meant sufficient feed for the cattle and consequent moderate prosperity among the ranch owners. Distances of ten miles and over are common between neighbours. Roads are mere paths and byways. There is very little trouble about mud or soggy roads since the rainfall is never abundant. Even in the spring when for a short season the shallow rivers are filled with muddy water the soil is seldom moist.

At Forsythe is located three general stores where one can buy anything from coffins to musical instruments and molassess on tap. A large sign in front of one of the stores proclaims the whole truth: "We Sell Anything—Everything." There is a railway station, a small hotel where meals may be secured if ordered two hours in advance, a postoffice in one of the general stores, a few stranded freight cars on the sidings and very little else to be seen. Like so many other prairie towns Forsythe assumes an appearance of busyness each Saturday. The hotel does a thriving business and the stores are frequently crowded with eager people who usually would buy if they could. Some of the trading is managed on coupons. These are given out to reliable families and are accepted as cash for purchases until the supply is exhausted, when, if the credit balance will stand it, another book of "tickets" is issued. At harvest time settlement is supposed to be made unless circumstances prevent—which happens quite frequently. The merchants do more to keep these families alive and comfortable than church or state. There are no sidewalks or paved roads, yet autos travel to and fro through the village with amazing speed, leaving clouds of dust along their trail. The people are earnest and hard working. They are living in the most primitive conditions, owning the land, usually a gift by the government, but in houses which are neither comfortable nor convenient. Summers are exceedingly hot and arid and the winter seasons are bitterly cold and penetrating.

The church came into existence through the efforts of a chapel car evangelist who spent nearly a year living in this crowded but well equipped church on wheels. He was a faithful and diligent labourer. His sole ambition was to establish a ministering church and to see the people united in religious services. Unfailing labours crowned his efforts with success and one day, four years ago, the newly built church, costing two thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars, was dedicated. It was a happy occasion and over sixty people were welcomed into full membership. Two months later this worker of wonders on the plains was sent elsewhere to continue at the task assigned to him of establishing new churches. Then came the difficulty of securing a minister. Few men were available in the first place. Wives objected to the isolation and loneliness of the plains. Prospects were limited as far as growth in numbers was concerned.

But finally, a young man came. He was eager and ardent, willing and hopeful. He brought with him a young wife and baby and in no time at all the young pair were loved by all and idealized by the people who recognized genuineness when they saw it and worked eagerly to do everything the new leader proposed. There were picnics and outings to a nearby grove; a splendid vacation church school, lasting two weeks, family reunions; and well attended services. The women sewed for mission fields and sent a barrel or two each year to some needy place although their own certainly was one. But they were contented and very happy and the church filled a large place in the entire country side. There was much "going on" and somebody was always having or giving a party of some sort to somebody else. The minister laboured with the men in the fields; here was a piece of fence that needed mending; a barn that had to have attention; or cattle that needed treatment. Children and young people knew his friendly care. Membership increased until the peak was reached in 1928 when a total of one hundred and seventy-five were listed as communicants.

Then came the fatal blow. A town far to the south in the same state had been told about this young man and promptly drafted him to its "larger" field of service. As a matter of fact it is probable that he could not have rendered a larger service to the Kingdom of God and men than right at Forsythe. Reluctantly he gave way to the pressure brought upon him by state officials and ministerial friends. It was a sad day at Forsythe when he was bidding farewell. They loved him as one of their own though he had been there just two years. The larger town church offered him five hundred dollars more in salary and helped him to see that there were no possibilities at Forsythe, whereas . . .

(The situation described above may be designated 23a in contradistinction to what follows, 23b.)

23b. Two months later began the second pastorate. This man was a great "talker." He was constantly telling people about things he had accomplished; of the "calls" he could have had; and of the stirring evangelistic meetings and conversions he had inspired. In less than six months everybody suspected him of being a "fourflusher" and in time they began to dislike him because of the self-exhalting habits. This man was always defending "the faith once delivered to the saints" and preaching vehement sermons against recent scientific discoveries and theories. Over against the wall, back of his pulpit, he hung a chart of "The Seven Dispensations" and for a year or more preached from this map which purported to give Biblical authority for the theory that God has dealt with humanity in "sections" or dispensations; giving dates from creation to the end of time; Bible quotations painted in bright red and yellow colours; and portraying at the extreme right and left the state of the "blessed" and the "bottomless" pit, the abode of the wicked. The people found it somewhat mysterious and beyond their grasping. They had never heard such "gospel" before.

Thomas Chalmers, according to his own confession, preached for eight years on the supposed grosser sins of his parishioners (though in reality they were good living honourable people) because thievery, adultery and slander were the only subjects which stirred him to anger. So this preacher at Forsythe belaboured his faithful flock with stirring condemnations of the wrath to come. But unlike Dr. Chalmers he did not experience a change of heart. There came no season of fervent preaching of brotherhood, forgiveness and love. When his sermons on the chart were finished there began all over again the same type of "prophetic" preaching with its stern arraignment of everything.

Church attendance began to diminish. The church school dwindled to an attendance of less than thirty, one year after the arrival of the new leader. Some of the members failed to keep their pledge to the building fund and the local budget. Financial necessity compelled the church to reduce the pastor's salary. People began to complain of poor prospects in the farming business. Social activities came to a standstill and an air of despondency crept into the Forsythe church.

The minister, however, found a way out. He combined pastoral calling with merchandizing. His car carried a good supply of toilet articles, trinkets, samples of clothing, shoes, etc. Easter and Christmas season provided selling occasions for stationary cards and gifts. He also began to advertize his evangelistic abilities. Time and again during the next year he would leave the parish for a week or two. He bought a larger car and seemed to prosper.

In speaking of the field he remarked that "You can't do anything here. People are too poor and illiterate. They won't give to the church or attend services. They don't appreciate good sermons. There are no young people or children, etc." He inquired about possibilities to go "where a man has a chance to work hard." He wanted a "big field." "I'd like to try a city church once. I've given my best years to country churches and it seems to me I deserve a city charge."

This man claims to have studied in "several colleges." He holds no diploma or degree of any sort, however, and has not read a single worth while book on country life or rural church problems. He is certain that the trouble at Forsythe lies with the people; they are unresponsive, unappreciative and unprogressive.

MINTERVILLE

CASE 24

MINTERVILLE is a rather progressive, Mid-Western rural town of eight hundred people. The main street runs along the railroad track, past the station and has no structures on the side which is owned by the railway company. It is an exceptionally good trading centre and serves villages and farming areas for fully twenty miles in every direction. Some of the inhabitants are retired farmers whose incomes are limited by the profits the several farms, which they own and rent out to tenants, produce. This creates an acute tenant farmer problem in most of the surrounding country. Buildings, machinery and the soil are woefully neglected at times, and less prosperous years cause a constant moving about of families occupying the rented farms. Much of the business is on credit. Good years are quite common, however, and real failures were unheard of until recently.

Minterville has several banks, (though two have recently failed) the usual number of general merchandise stores and restaurants, pool rooms and a movie. Brick or stone buildings are confined to Main street with the exception of the school building, attractively located in a square lined by shade trees, a football field and winding walks. People are all of American stock and seemingly comfortable. The streets are of sand and clay which in times of rain become quite gummy.

The surrounding area is a typical farming country—level, rich fields, black soil and roomy barns. Wherever the owner does the work and lives on the place he is prosperous. Enough grain and fodder is raised to provide for herds of pigs, cows and a few horses. And of course, there are the ever present hen houses, mostly small ones, with some poultry products for trading purposes. These people are intelligent Americans whose ancestors originally came from the East. Many of them are of New England stock. Families are fair sized, ranging from four to six children, all are being educated according to modern "schooling" ideas and several young people from these homes are attending the state college. Reading matter is abundant and mail order catalogues are found in almost all homes. Summers are warm while the winter season is likely to be rainy and cold, with considerable snow. County roads running checker-board fashion are numerous and always in good condition while the country roads proper are terrible whenever heavy rains fall.

Minterville has four churches, three Protestant and one Roman Catholic. One of the three Protestant churches, (24a) thrives on "hurricane" evangelistic meetings, series after series, with no particular gain from year to year and no program whatever except these "special meetings." Here the preacher is limited in education and dogmatic, "dead certain" of everything and glories in his church being a "spiritual" organization. By spiritual he means that there are long prayers, much shouting, frequent confessions, lively meetings charged with an emotional atmosphere and that "my people read the Bible and pray every day!"

The second church, (24b) is dead, no matter how you look at it. The pastor gives part time to the field, which means one service a week, occasional calling, weddings and funerals. There is a small church school, less than twenty-five in number; twenty-seven members in the church, half of whom are inactive.

The leading Protestant church, (24c) has had an interesting history. It came into existence through the efforts of a Sunday school worker who established a school at Minterville some forty years ago and succeeded in organizing a church. The first building proved inadequate some twenty-five years later and a larger one was projected. The second structure was a large commodious affair which lent itself admirably to the old fashioned type of meetings where the preaching service was the only essential part of the program.

Then some years ago, it became apparent that class rooms were needed and possibly a social hall of some sort. Committees were duly appointed and functioned. Then came a rift. There was a decided difference of opinion as to what should be done and how much money was to be spent. These differences were finally swept aside by a group of well-to-do families, all related, who assumed leadership and the enlarged building project was completed much against the wishes of a strong minority. Their contention was that the Minterville church could easily get along without investing several thousand dollars in a building which already was reasonably adequate. The plant when completed had several separate classrooms, a large kitchen, a dining hall and stage, all in the back of the former main building which had practically been divided. The seating capacity of the auditorium was reduced to half and the basement was rebuilt to suit what was called the childrens' division. The total cost was over five thousand dollars.

Unhappily the differences of opinion in the church building program carried over into every phase of the work. As a result two women's classes were established, each fully conscious that the teachers were actually rivals. There was a constant pull for official positions in the church school and considerable feeling lay dormant at every church meeting. It was impossible to express opinions without being misunderstood. Then came the matter of paying for the new equipment. This was wilfully and skilfully left to the group which had sponsored the project. It so happened that the most important family financially failed in business, due largely to the collapse of a local bank. Six months later this family left town. With a heavy financial burden upon their hands the two hundred and seventy-five communicants began to feel the financial strain. Some tenant farmers moved away; others quietly withdrew; while all the town knew that the two Bible classes continued on a competitive basis and the two Sunday school teachers refused to cooperate in any way at all.

Meantime the "I told you so's" got busy. The past ten years have witnessed a continuous parade of preachers, some holding on for a year or two, most of them less; all declaring with conviction that "you can't expect God to bless a church like that." And then they resigned. But the work continued nevertheless in the "leading church of Minterville." New comers strayed in now and then, usually departing when the situation became known. The church school fared very well. For children, being unconcerned, did not at first share the spirit of the church. But there were no young people. They were totally lost to the church. The new kitchen and dining hall were unused save for one or two occasions a year when some lodge or club rented them for social purposes. The money was put into the building fund. Few of the classrooms were occupied; there was no real need for them now and soon plaster and paint began to need additional attention. Meantime the two Bible class leaders continued their strife.

Into this atmosphere came the latest minister, a man of sixty-five, ill trained and not knowing anything about the local situation. He soon found out however. He then proposed to hold revival meetings. In his former parish this was one of his hobbies. But at Minterville the people would not yield to such plans. They had seen too much of that in one of their local churches. Moreover they were a "different class of people." But the pastor insisted that there were many "unsaved" in the community and outside the church. Peculiarly enough this minister thought of those who were not members of the church, though active in it and contributing communicants, as "unsaved." This term did not indicate those members whose actions could be questioned as inconsistent with their being Christian. He frequently referred to these men and women who were not full members as the unsaved. "Why one day one of the unsaved men gave me ten dollars for charity work and another furnished my coal last winter," commented the preacher.

This one effort constituted the sum total of a plan or program to overcome the unfortunate spirit in the church. After that came no suggestions, no ideas. Pastoral care gradually deteriorated to a few calls made without enthusiasm or joy or purpose. More and more the defeated leader in the leading church became a recluse and totally reconciled to the local situation. Yet he lived in a thriving community of eight hundred souls where his church had many moral and material advantages.

When called upon he was wistfully visualizing another and more fertile field. He had already cast about for invitations to candidate and faithful friends were no doubt called upon to help him out. Confronted with a real problem and a genuine challenge, ten men in twelve years or less, had surrendered without a heroic effort to face a situation which demanded courage, wisdom and leadership. And this man walked true to custom. His personal carriage and appearance testified to acknowledged defeat. His study consisted of a small table with a few hymnals and books upon it—and that was all. He had not read a single book on rural life or the country church. He began preaching when a boy and had never graduated from any school.

Not only is Minterville itself a golden opportunity but the surrounding area is dotted with tiny villages and hamlets most of which have no religious attention whatsoever. There are two such fields within three miles of town. Farmers have for years been interested in cooperative buying and selling. Schools have been consolidated and efficient methods are welcomed everywhere. Farm implements are of the most up-to-date variety and the homes in and around Minterville are usually modern in every respect. This church is known to have upon its membership roll many of the leading citizens though few are active at the present time.

The church alone, apparently, is unable to cope with a problem which could most certainly be solved by the right type of leadership. With the loss in membership and revenues has come an inclination to find pastors less qualified as leaders because they can be secured for less salary! In this respect unfortunately, Minterville is not unusual.

TRIPLE RIVER

CASE 25

Triple River is another small rural village. At the centre, comprizing a railroad station, store, post-office and garage, reside about twenty-five families. They are seemingly content and undisturbed by changing tides and times. Nearly every family is aligned on either one side or the other of an age-old controversy centring in the local church. It originated almost three generations ago when a certain member gave a sum of money and a lot for the purpose of transferring the meeting house to the village from a location two miles up the river. This was finally carried out but left the few families away from the centre out of the limelight and placed those more conveniently located in charge. Through the years this controversy has shifted a hundred times and attached to itself numerous incidental problems. The endowment fund provides a fair income and with the regular contributions enables the church to pay fourteen hundred dollars per year. There is a comfortable though a rather old and large parsonage.

Triple River has no industries, no special attraction and no particular reason for existing, except that here live a few families who own their homes. There are some twenty youths and about forty-five children in school. The young people are nearly all high school students enrolled at the Clintonburg school nine miles away, to which the town of Triple River transports them. Bridge is all the rage at Triple River. It has captured nearly every family. There are no foreigners in the community and many of the families are composed of old people whose children are seeking their fortunes elsewhere.

Every family owns a car or two and no one is really poor. But in the surrounding hill sections, where are located several smaller farms, one finds illiteracy; the mentally deficient; and not infrequently large families living in poverty. The land is stony and unproductive. It is not wooded but is covered with underbrush, except in the cleared off spaces which are relatively few and small. The people for the most part work in nearby mill towns or do other kinds of occasional labour. Roads are almost impassable three months of the year. Medical care is rendered by an out-of-town physician whose fees are necessarily high. School children are examined and weighed by a visiting nurse who comes to the school at the centre twice each year. She has done heroic work. The Farm Bureau also has been a god-send to some families. The church alone does not seem to care.

The Triple River church is comfortable, rather cozy and well cared for. It is a one room affair with an attached kitchenette and social hall seating fifty people.

(25a) The former minister spent four hard years in rescuing the Triple River church from total extinction. He was a worker and knew how to sublimate the local church controversy. When he resigned the church was in the most flourishing condition it had ever enjoyed. New members had been added and old ones returned to active participation, making a total of seventy-five. This diligent and faithful pastor received a salary of one thousand dollars. His wife was worth half a dozen assistants. She managed the little family group of three, kept a spotless house, was sociable and friendly, and the most active member of the church. Under her inspiration there came into being an afternoon church school in one of the farm homes four miles out on one of the byways, where fifteen children gathered from time to time for a happy and profitable hour. But the minister was called to a larger church and is succeeding there also, while Triple River suffered a real loss.

The present pastor came five years ago. (25b) In less than a year the gains of the past four were lost. The old church controversy thrived once more and families began to talk about the time-worn problem as to who was "running the church" and why? What had happened? The new pastor was a man of long experience but no training, preached a good sermon occasionally, but befriended only a limited number of women. Being a widower they cared for his home and provided most of his meals. He spent much of his time in three of these homes and borrowed money quite freely wherever he could. His salary had been increased to twelve hundred dollars but this proved insufficient. Soon he owed everybody in the community something. Some of the creditors grew talkative; while the preacher moved about in a limited circle of his chosen friends. Congregations indicated the general trend. There were no additions and the preacher grew more and more slovenly. Some of the men who had been the mainstay in the church and were of unusual worth could not follow leadership as feeble and faulty as that. They dropped out.

In two years the Triple River church skidded into oblivion once more as far as its impact upon the community was concerned. The minister began to preach about the "awful moral degeneracy of modern folks" and to condemn families by name from the pulpit and in conversations. His own appearance became repulsive, due partly to his tobacco chewing habit. He spent much of his time away from his own parish visiting friends and relatives, getting back in time for the weekly services.

This man had had no education beyond grammar grades. He often told over and over again the story of his marvellous conversion experience and the unmistakable call to preach he had had. When asked what he had preached about last Sunday, he replied, "I told my folks about Fosdick!" When it was suggested that most of these people had probably never heard of a preacher by that name he added, "Well, I believe in preparing my people for the devil so they will know him when he comes."

Though the needs in and about Triple River were on the surface and unusual opportunities were lying about in the open country, he never ventured beyond his well worn path to the limited few who clung to him. They had now become the chief officers of the church and while they readily admitted that their pastor had some serious faults, they commended him for "being faithful to us" and "not a complainer."

Another noteworthy commentary was that offered by another informant who said that "our former pastor kept all of us so busy that we had no time for anything else; this man leaves us perfectly undisturbed and inactive."

At the various ministers conferences which he faithfully attended he was one of the first to get into the discussions. What he said usually gravitated around what "I tried to do"—or "have accomplished." From these conferences he would invariably carry home a basket full of food stuffs which he just as invariably solicited. After five years of this type of ministry the community seemed to have become reconciled to the inevitable. Even the old church quarrel subsided with the ever decreasing interest in the Triple River organization. The membership dropped from seventy-five to twenty though the population has not changed, and fifteen is a good average attendance at the Sunday service. Meantime, however, children and young people alike are far removed from religious influences of the favourable sort while undoubtedly the slovenly, inefficient preacher must have created some mental concepts regarding the church and religion.

II

PRINCIPLES OF RURAL CHURCH WORK

PRINCIPLES OF RURAL CHURCH WORK

THE foregoing pages present concrete cases of churches some of which are doing fine service and others are at a standstill or are a menace. The study brings out quite clearly, even to the general reader, some distinct differences in procedure. The aim in this section is, through study of the churches described, to suggest principles of procedure in beginning or developing work in a rural church. Some of these will be seen to spring right out of the descriptions given; others are deduced from the more personal contact with the fields and from the "feel" of the situation thus acquired. All of them enter definitely into the success or failure of the cases considered.

These principles are not arranged according to their importance nor necessarily in the order in which they should be worked out. A congregation resembles a living organism where processes go along together and where seemingly insignificant functions are as necessary for health and vitality as others of larger proportions. But the various points are numbered for clearness and for reference.

As these principles are not spun out of abstract thought but are revealed in the situations presented, it is necessary for the reader, if he is studying seriously, to refer constantly to the cases cited. It would, indeed, be better to make his own deductions for most of the evidence is spread before him.

1. KNOW THE FIELD

This is not as easy as it seems. It requires that one be wide awake, a keen observer and a close student with skill and technique for investigation. One may live in a community for years and know little about it. Indeed there is a kind of familiarity which seems to blur the vision. It is notorious that visitors who have only a few days in a city see more of the striking features than many of the residents. People who live in the midst of wonderful rural scenery sometimes never see its beauty.

The fact that a minister lives in a community and even calls in the homes does not mean, unfortunately, that he knows the field. This is exemplified in most of the cases in Group B and Group C.

The leader at Copperfield and Graniteville, (Case 14) did not know there were children and youth there nor that these had the desire and ability to do constructive work. One who is merely holding on (Cases 15, 22 and 25b) cannot be expected to see needs and possibilities.

At Lindsey (Case 21) the church and its leader did not seem to realize that the world had changed, nor that the church buildings needed cleaning and repair and the people help for daily living.

The minister at Renard (Case 22) complained that there were no young people in his parish but it was demonstrated that there was a large number of them, many of whom were ready for service.

On the other hand, all in Group A made it their business to know the field and they also went to no end of trouble to awaken their people to the conditions. For example, none of the old residents would admit there were any children not in Sunday school in Brunswick (Case 5).

How the field is to be studied is a matter of technique which should be mastered by the prospective leader while in school, but it will include: (a) trained observation; (b) consultation and discussion; and (c) some sort of a survey informally or formally conducted.

2. *SEE THE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES*

This is an element in knowing the field but it is set out for emphasis. The minister in Case 1 knew each member of his class intimately. These young people and he were personal friends. Yet it was not until he was enrolling the class for the second or third year, using a card which asked for the special interests of each one, that he discovered to his amazement (and chagrin) that one boy, of whom no one suspected this, was deeply interested in dramatics. Up till then he had never been cast for any part in a play. But he was in the next dramatization and did his part well! Few of the old residents knew or felt that there was anything significant to the church in the presence of, for example, the little colony of foreigners in Case 1; in Renard (Case 22) few saw the significance of the immigrants *until they were in the majority* and the church had almost dwindled away.

In Group A every congregation studied shows that the leaders grasped certain outstanding characteristics in the situation. Other things may be commonplace;

these show vantage points, special needs, and possible opportunities for service. It was due to the fact that the young minister in Mount Hope (Case 2) grasped the relation of the church to the foreign residents and of their readiness to respond to friendship that made such a work there possible.

In Brunswick (Case 5) the minister, though he could not touch all the Sunday schools, could meet most of the young people and this was taken advantage of to the fullest extent. Perhaps the contrast in Case 13 between (a) and (b) on the one hand and (c) on the other shows most clearly the difference between leaders who do not see significant opportunities and one who does and presents a constructive program.

3. SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES AND MEET NEEDS

The church exists to serve in its own day and generation. Its purpose is to help its people to live. Opportunities are easily missed. To take but a single case. Peace has been an ideal of prophets for centuries. Jesus is called the Prince of Peace. The Christian church holds up peace as one great end to be sought. In recent years this has seized the imagination of the Nations and marvellous things have been done to make peace an actuality. To mention only a few of these one may refer to the League of Nations, the Locarno Treaty, the World Court, the Briand-Kellogg peace pact and Prime Minister MacDonald's visit. Here were world events affecting directly the welfare of nations and millions of people. Only two churches, as far as discovered, made any use of these mighty events. Mount Hope (Case 2) built young peoples' meetings around them and had a wonderful school worship service in which, along with Isaiah 35, was read the heart of the peace pact. The young people at Ascot also used such material continually in their discussions.

The two hundredth anniversary in Ascot (Case 1) was seized upon by the church and in a sense was the immediate occasion of its renascence. Mount Hope saw the foreign peoples as an opportunity for Christian friendship. Ministering to others had its old magic power of healing the wounds in the church itself.

The new leader at Centerville (Case 13c) saw the need for public service and for friendly contacts. The manse or parsonage (as so often is the case) became the open door to a larger service.

The minister at Brunswick (Case 5) led the church to minister to the health and economic betterment in the community; to the need for fellowship and friendship; and to improving and beautifying church and homes.

At Forsythe (Case 23) the minister's interest was so centred on "dispensations" he did not see the people in the pews, and Cases 21, 24 and others were so intent on "souls" their eyes were holden from the need of love, service, cooperation and united effort in building up the best life in the community; or they were so busy in attacking other people and institutions that they had little interest in local needs. There is no doubt that under these conditions these churches languished.

4. BUILD UP THE MORALE

It is clear that in most of the cases where progressive work was done the people, through a longer or shorter period of years, were aroused to a vital interest in the church's program. It was only then that the best work was able to be begun. With their interest and their backing progress was possible, indeed inevitable.

Nothing is much clearer than that here is a real distinctive mark of an educational program. It never seeks to "put something over" on the people nor merely to get things done. It seeks to develop or awaken the people so that they, seeing the need, meet that need at whatever cost.

Obviously this is a laborious undertaking. It is often easier to do a thing oneself; to put it over; but once a people is aroused their very momentum carries them along to other objectives. The process is continuous. And often they themselves become the initiators and the dynamic of other far reaching undertakings.

It often happens that country congregations after some years of stagnation lose heart. Perhaps disappointed in leaders, defeated in purposes, torn by misunderstandings or weighed down with economic depression they are dispirited and their nerves are frayed. What they need—and the same is probably equally true of town and city congregations in like situation—is to have their confidence and self-respect restored. Cheer and encouragement and the joy of being able to accomplish things proved in these churches to be effective agents in the recovery and strengthening of morale. When morale is gone in a congregation it is as serious as in an army.

It is difficult to find anything in Group C except at Forsythe which was calculated to build up the morale of the people.

In Group B (Case 11) the minister, though keen to do so, did not seem able to get the combination that would unlock the energies of the people. The leader himself being the "whole show" as in Case 12, plunging into continual controversy and condemnation of others, cannot build up the morale of the people; neither can those merely holding on, (Cases 14, 15, and 25b); or ten ministers in twelve years as at Minterville (Case 24); or the minister selling toilet articles (Case 23). How could a leader so slovenly and untidy as in Case 15; or one disgusted with his field and always talking about having a congregation worthy of him or a large city church, and seeking popularity by familiarity and by questionable stories (Case 23), develop courage and purpose in a congregation?

In contrast to these is the new minister and his wife in Centerville (Case 13c), and the community director in the face of great handicaps in Case 14. Here, however difficult the situation, a beginning was made and new life expressed itself in an attempt on the part of the people themselves to undertake some enterprizes.

The development of confidence in their leader and in themselves was a definite policy in all cases in Group A. Some enterprize successfully done was often the beginning coupled with an increase in friendliness and cheer. Old wounds were healed. New blood was given a chance. Life was brightened. Faith, hope and love soon brought new vigour and new life.

5. GAIN THE FRIENDSHIP AND CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE

It is usually a mistake to rush into innovations before the congregation has learned to know, respect and trust the leader. This is an added reason for exercising great care in order that the first few steps may be wisely taken. When a leader has the people's confidence it is surprising how greatly they will venture.

There is sound reason at the basis of this caution on the part of a people. If a stranger offers one, say, pills he is not likely to swallow them. But the trusted family doctor's prescription is taken without question. The business house that has been established for years and is known for its reliability stands behind its merchandise; but the passing "agent" or "peddler" or "gold brick artist" is often treated with suspicion. A word, a merest hint, from a trusted friend goes farther with one than the elaborate arguments of strangers.

It takes considerable time for a people to get to know the new leader. They judge him by his attitude and his home and business relationships as well as by his sermons. One secret of being trusted is to be trustworthy.

One apparent mistake in Case 11 was that the young minister was too eager. He failed to talk frankly and openly with those who had most influence. He did not carry the people with him. Most of the other leaders in Groups B and C, except 11 and 13c, never could gain the confidence of the people as a whole. In the heat of an evangelistic campaign some would be enthusiastic; but controversial matters tended to divide. Lack of strict business probity and of good habits and the appearance of a gentleman defeated confidence.

It is interesting to note the variety of ways in which the leaders in Group A won the confidence of their people. Each one did it but no two approaches were the same. One element seems constant, namely, the carrying out of some worthy enterprize to a successful issue. One taste of success gives the people confidence in their own ability and also in their leader. A few successful projects give new enthusiasm and whet the appetites for new ventures.

6. SELECT CAREFULLY THE FIRST ENTERPRIZES

A great deal depends on the first moves. A failure at the beginning is serious. An initial success is a tonic. Presumably the field is fairly well known and several immediate problems have emerged. Which one or group should be tackled first? Grant that several are equally serious and important, it is best, for the good of the whole and taking the long view, for the congregation to select that one or group of problems which has the widest local appeal, will command the most interest and is most sure of succeeding. Once a group tastes the joy of wrestling with a difficulty and feels the thrill and glow of success it is easier to attack a much more difficult situation. Partial success or even failure is not so serious with those who are seasoned as it is with people who are only beginning to do social and religious work. The wise leaders in the cases studied guided the group to undertake first some concrete pieces of work which he was fairly sure would be a success.

The anniversary celebration and pageant in Ascot met all the conditions suggested above. It was a tough pull to get them launched; but once well away the tide and current carried the work along to a successful issue. On the strength of that it was possible to begin the building scheme. A successful Primary department led to a reorganized school.

At Mount Hope a critical point was passed when the church decided on a policy which made it possible for all communions to unite in membership. A liberal policy on the part of the larger communion blessed both the majority and the minority. Failure at this point would probably have wrecked the church as it eventually did Silver Falls (Case 12) and Centerville (Case 13c).

The people at Brunswick soon took a pride in their church property. The financial success of the first year, the larger congregations and the live young peoples' society gave them the courage to tackle what seemed to be insuperable.

The director in Case 14 had a difficult situation because of the minister, though this is a terrible fact to record. But she found parents of little children concerned about their religious nurture. This made a real opening which led to greater sympathy and confidence, and was the basis of her further work.

7. DEVELOP FRIENDLINESS

Friendship and love are two major qualities of the Christian life. A study of these churches reveals the fact that the development of friendliness between the individuals and groups in a congregation is one of the essentials to progress. This might have been assumed. But it comes almost as a shock when discovered through a study of cases.

It is a fact clearly suggested by these studies that even in small country places people in the same community do not know each other and that groups may be almost as separated from each other as if they belonged to a separate caste. Further, there may be antagonism, jealousies, and feuds (as in Case 14). What an example to have the two teachers of adult classes at daggers points as in Case 24.

Here are definite ends sought and established in the churches where the best work was done:

(a) A friendly congregation. If this group who worship together has the warm glow of friendliness the whole service will be richer. This friendliness was cultivated in all five cases in Group A.

(b) A friendly countryside. The people of one section or road or district may not know each other or know the other sections. In Ascot it was definitely arranged to have members in one district call on all families in some other district, the "friendly visitors" and districts changing every six months or so. There were also neighbourhood meetings besides larger gatherings.

Mount Hope had a great deal of this to do because of thirteen different nations being represented in the parish. Brunswick soon became a friendly family group. Many of the cases in Groups B and C are illustrations of the opposite. And a house divided against itself cannot stand.

(c) Group contacts. The friendship of individuals with other individuals needs to be supplemented by greater understanding and friendliness among groups. In some places foreign peoples and old residents have nothing in common. In other cases the town and the country people feel alienated. Then there are social divisions and family factions. No church studied was in a healthy condition so long as these marked cleavages existed.

The social gatherings in Mount Hope brought native and foreign, rich and poor, town and country, employer and employed together and through working together each learned to know and appreciate the other. The church and the grange, the library and health agencies in Ascot got to know each others work better. The same is true, each according to its own situation, in all the churches where progressive work is being done.

8. EMPHASIZE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The most outstanding fact revealed by this study is that in every case of successful work the greatest progress came through religious education. In every case in Group A religious education received great emphasis and produced great results.

In Ascot (Case 1) every department of the church school was developed to a high state of efficiency. All, from the little Beginners to the young people, were engaged in purposeful worship, study and service. The young people were live, interested in developing their own programs, rich in service. They were in constant training in leading.

The vital projects carried on in Mount Hope by all ages, the attention given to promotion of religious education in church and school accounts in no small measure for the success on that field.

In both parishes the vacation schools which were a part of the regular work of the church, ministered to all in the community including foreign groups so often ignored.

At Riland (Case 3) the church school was well supported and summer camps extended the work of the regular school. At Pine Valley (Case 4) every effort was made to keep up the schools and young peoples' societies. In Brunswick (Case 5) the half dozen Sunday schools were never neglected, one being organized to meet the needs in an isolated, neglected section with some ten or twelve pupils. The young minister here was so keen about this work and so sensible of the need of understanding the principles better that he gave up several years to make a special study of religious education.

The only gleam of light in the sombre Copperfield and Graniteville (Case 14) sky came through the work of the director of religious education. After a short while some of these groups sought out larger opportunity for worship and service. Centerville (Case 13) was hopeless till the new minister came with a well rounded program. The reorganized school took on new life. The young people rose to the opportunity. Their lives were being touched and helped.

In none of these cases were the adults neglected. With greater readiness they undertook to teach and to serve in other capacities. World friendship intrigued more than had been previously in mission study. New building, the discussion of community problems, cooperation, gave them a chance to practise their religion while in every case the ministers felt that only a beginning had been made compared with what ought to be done, yet the educational process was at work and was moving onward and upward gathering momentum. It is a process which grows with the years, enriching and expanding year after year.

Christian education is evangelism. Study every case. Here are some which claim to be evangelistic. They proclaim that their work is to "preach the gospel," to "save souls," to preserve the faith and dogmas of the past, to attack all who differ from them in formulated beliefs. They also place great emphasis on the recurrent evangelistic campaigns. Minterville (Case 24) which began as a Sunday school neglected its educational task and specialized in "hurricane evangelism" until the church lost all vitality in a fine community of nearly a thousand people.

The object of evangelism is to help people know God and live the Christ life in their every day walk and conversation. Now examining all the cases it is found that the church which was torn by dissension, did not attract youth; that those which would respond only to emotional appeals needed more sensationalism each succeeding year. On the other hand in all the cases in Group A, in Case 13c and in the director's work in Case 14, the growth in the Christian life was normal and natural.

In the former cases, too, it not seldom happened that when movements for cooperation in the community were on foot which aimed at bettering human welfare, these churches stood in the way and opposed; while in the Group A cases the church led in cooperation and in the promotion of human welfare at home and abroad. In these cases a certain type of evangelism and "preaching of the Gospel" and "Bliss or Blister" and "The Lord's Washday" type of sermons (Case 15) were associated with a narrow selfishness and social indifference.

But in the other churches the continuous process of training in Christian living year after year and in helping to make the world better and happier brought an increasing productivity. Like good farming the crops were not only larger but the productivity of the fields increased. The development of leaders is an essential part of the educational process.

A severe test on local leadership is imposed when a vacancy occurs. Ascot, Mount Hope and Brunswick stood this test. Ascot's was especially severe because of vacancy and a misfit minister who stayed a year. Yet the local work, especially the religious education program, went on in a remarkably efficient manner.

9. SEEK OUT AND DEVELOP LEADERSHIP

Several who have had wide experience in country churches assert that "there is ample latent leadership in any rural community for all local needs." This is fully substantiated in the cases studied. Ascot proved to have really wonderful latent leadership when a varied, progressive program was under way. Mount Hope with its large foreign population suffered no lack of leaders after two or three years. Brunswick, in the open country could have supplied good leadership for two or three other churches. Riland and Pine Valley, Copperfield and Centerville began to respond to a constructive policy by showing interest and initiative.

Contrast with these Cases 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25. Here the ministers showed no desire to develop others and no skill in doing it. One cannot well stimulate leadership if he maintains himself in the limelight; if he runs everything. Neither can he if he himself is just holding on, or is vulgar and slovenly. Silver Falls, Centerville and Montgrove (Cases 12, 13a and b, and 15) must also be classed among those who failed at this crucial point. It is to be noted that the churches with no vital enterprizes to call forth initiative and leadership and no program to help train leaders are the very places where complaints are loudest that there is nothing to work with!

The successful churches had these definite plans:

(a) Vital enterprizes, concrete and practical, that challenged the best in the church.

(b) Educational programs for all ages from babies to adults in which intelligent plans were followed to develop leaders.

(c) Classes, clubs, societies, projects which stimulate many kinds of interests.

(d) Training classes for prospective teachers among older boys and girls and young people; and for teachers and officers. Sometimes these were in the local church; sometimes they were community enterprizes.

(e) A constant stream of young people and teachers to institutes, conferences, conventions and summer schools. For example the little church at Ascot aimed to have a number equal to one-quarter of all its teachers and officers at a summer school every year with all expenses paid. It was possible to send these five or six, not because of any large gift, but because all shared in it—the Sunday school, the young peoples' society, and individual members in the congregation.

Some ministers claimed they had no time to spend with children and young people and committees. One expressed it by saying he had "no time to ring door bells or for teaching kids" (Case 13). This raises the question as to what the minister's work is. Is it not *to disciple,* to train in the Christian life? This study reveals that those who do most have also the most time for personal work of this sort, as for example, the minister at Ascot who had a full load in addition to his parish and Mount Hope's minister who was very active in many local and denominational affairs. The same was true in a large degree of every minister where successful work was being done. Is it time for the country church to ask itself seriously what it seeks to do? If merely to listen to sermons then one type of minister will be sought. If it is to develop the people and serve humanity it must look carefully into the character, training and work of any one whom it thinks of calling to be its minister.

10. COOPERATE WITH OTHER AGENCIES

One big difference between successful and non-successful country churches is the indifference of the latter to movements and agencies round about them. The wide awake church is alive to what is being done and is ready to cooperate with other upbuilding agencies. This is a matter of great importance and deserves serious consideration.

It is not possible to point out every case but a few will be cited. Ascot cooperated with a health agency. This agency made a thorough survey of the children in one community already referred to, without cost to the parents. Some were found undernourished and parents were helped to provide what they needed. A tubercular child was put in a sanitarium. After three years she was discharged cured. Her life was probably saved. A defective child was put in an institution where scientific care was provided quite beyond the means of the family. The church also worked with the town library through its committee and so helped to secure the best type of general reading and also some especially valuable in religious work. The grange and church cooperated to the advantage of both.

Mount Hope succeeded in working with Nationalistic organizations, and with other community agencies both in town and country.

At Brunswick some of the finest help came through organizations like the Farmers' Institutes and other cooperative movements in providing better stock. The medical profession was interested and the local press to the advantage of all concerned.

But there is a type of community activity on the part of ministers and churches which is obviously antagonistic to the progress of the Kingdom. The church at Renard sought to control votes and to be the political boss of "the foreigners." One minister who was the editor of a local newspaper might have used that position for the good of the people but instead rather degraded his profession. The common peddler for private gain did not in that activity contribute to the best human welfare. Vieing with vaudeville in having two-step and jazz music and doing stunts in the pulpit are not the type of community service that is needed.

All of the churches in Group A and also in Cases 11, 13c and the director in Case 14 cooperated heartily with denominational headquarters. This was particularly true in regard to the whole missionary work of the churches and in religious education. They also worked heartily with the denominations in their cooperative work especially as represented in the State Councils of Religious Education and other Boards and Committees.

Most of the other cases were either dead to all such non-local-church enterprizes (Cases 14, 15, 22, and 25b) or were positively antagonistic to other agencies, even to other churches (Cases 12, 13b, 21, 23, 24) notwithstanding the fact that in many of these places cooperative movements were succeeding in other lines.

For example at Minterville (Case 24) the farmers had succeeded in cooperative buying and selling even; in consolidating the schools; and in other ways had worked together for the common good. But in spite of the new spirit the churches not only did not promote unity but stood as a barrier in its way or as an active cause of dissension.

But two agencies stand out preeminently, namely the home and the school. In all the study there was no evidence that Group C did anything constructive for or with either. Both were preached *at* and attacked. Even the normal schools were not exempt (Case 21). The opposite is true of the more effective churches. The homes were helped by visitation on the part of ministers and others; by parents' classes as in Cases 1, 2, and 14; by making books and articles available; by social times; and perhaps most through the interest of the children and young people in the church school (including the vacation school).

Some approaches were made to closer friendship with the public school but these leaders themselves are the first to admit that only a slight beginning was made. The opportunity of working with the school is along these lines:

(a) Through the school board in securing and retaining the highest type of teacher, both in academic preparation, in successful teaching, and in moral and religious character.

(b) By building up the highest type of school morals and ideals and developing the best school spirit.

(c) By increasing the interest of the people in everything that pertains to school welfare.

(d) By helping teachers to develop character through the regular work, the organization and attitudes in the school, play and extra curricula activities.

(e) By the teaching of religion through cooperation with the school authorities. Many communities are now having the children for at least an hour a week "released time."

11. WIDEN THE PEOPLE'S VISION

People without vision perish. Notice how congregations that advanced emancipated the people, pulled them out of ruts, set them upon hills, expanded their horizon. This end was accomplished in a great variety of ways. The method depended on the immediate situation but the aim was the same.

One way common to all the progressive churches was through preaching. In every one of these cases the ministers worked hard in their studies. Their sermons were the best they were capable of preparing. The subjects related to the life of their people in the world in which they now lived. They were not engaged in fighting heresies of a past day, nor in attacking and finding fault with other churches and creeds. They were not concerned to force people through a highly emotionalized kind of experience nor were they in a panic to add names to their roll. The aim was to help their people see more clearly the great issues in life, and to nourish them in their religious life until they should through their own inner conviction commit themselves to God's cause. Through preaching they tried to give wider vision and to make Christian ideals more dynamic in life.

Through every age and grade the people from the youngest were led to understand something of the worldwide sweep of the Christian mission and each age group in its own way sought to help in bringing in a better day. Local needs were not forgotten but needy fields in this country and in all parts of the world were studied. The attitude stressed was not of superiors handing out doles of money and religion to "poor heathen" but of friends and brothers working together to promote human welfare.

Modern developments were taken advantage of as far as possible: medicine; agriculture, in its many forms; libraries; music and art; and many others. In every way the aim was to get people in touch with interests which would broaden the outlook and enrich life.

The young peoples' social life may be taken as a sample. Instead of having merely an old fashioned social or leaving the youth to find all their amusement in cards and dances, rich leisure time programs were planned. These included a great variety of jolly games; nature walks, winter fairs and sports, aquatic sports, team games like basketball, tennis, story telling, lectures, seasonal activities like Easter pageants and Christmas carol singing. Dramatics and pageantry were widely used. Reading was cultivated.

In most of the other cases one searches in vain for any evidence of widening the vision. Spiking the church down to ancient dogma (Case 24); selling toilet articles and spending years on the "dispensations" (Case 23); attacking normal and high schools (Case 21); stressing evangelistic campaigns and being "anti" everything (Cases 12, 21, 23 and 25); the interest in "souls" apart from life (Cases 13b, 21, 23, 24 and 25); the lack of any educational work (Case 22); merely trying to hold on (Cases 14 and 15);—such methods are not calculated to arouse people to new views of life, to stretch the mind and to launch them on new ventures.

One of the saddest features of the whole study is the appalling lack of reading, not to say study, on the part of almost all the ministers in Group C and in Cases 12, 13b, 14 and 15. Most of them had practically no books or magazines. A few books of sermons, commentaries and hymn books are not adequate for a live minister, judging by this study.

12. TAKE THE LONG LOOK

Religion and education look to the future. Both call for statesmanship. The statesman considers not only the present but the immediate and the distant future. He builds not for a day but for all time. It is noticeable that in every case where progressive work was done the leaders looked ahead thirty, forty, a hundred years and planned accordingly.

But that does not mean they waited inactive. It only means they worked with that future in view so that what was done now would make towards that greater good which is to be. They wrought with the foresight of those building a cathedral which would not be completed for generations.

Taking the long view helps to prevent falling into the mistake of trying short cuts and seeking only immediate results. There is a temptation, in coming to a new congregation, for a leader to play to the galleries, to seek quick returns regardless of the cost. But if he thinks in terms of that congregation thirty or forty years hence and of the great cause of the Kingdom of God such a policy is scarcely possible.

Looking to the future there is necessarily great emphasis on work with children and youth of the solidest kind; also on work with parents; on building up a better community; on the development of leaders; and on the awakening of intelligence, the open mind and the power of enlightened independent judgement. These things are characteristic of Group A; not at all of Group C; and of only two or three in Group B.

It is observed that in changes of ministry there is often a great loss of continuity. The new minister may undo what has taken years to accomplish. Much greater attention should be paid to this matter. Developing local leaders, people of independent judgement, and a policy worked out *by the people* are most essential. Much might also be done by conferences between the outgoing and the incoming minister.

13. SET UP OBJECTIVES

The builder has his blue print, the farmer his seasonal activities, the navigator his chart, the business man his aim as to production or sales. Clear cut objectives always help. Vagueness of aim tends to lack of precision in attack and advance.

Objectives are of at least three kinds: (a) ultimate, meaning what is hoped for, say in a generation or two; (b) what may be reasonably accomplished in a few years; and (c) immediate, or what is possible within the year.

One church set down these as some of its immediate objectives: increase in church attendance from twenty to thirty-five; arrange for beginners, primaries and adults each to have separate worship in Sunday school; new lessons for beginners and primaries; young people creating at least half of their own programs; a missions school for the whole church for five weeks in winter; a vacation church school; a teacher training class.

A statement of objectives necessarily depends on the local situation.

Ascot spent many helpful hours discussing, at different times, the ultimate aim in religious work, while Cases 1, 2, 5 and to some extent 3, 4, 13c and the director in 14 had various groups try to visualize what might be attained in say three years.

The ultimate objective is set forth by the Master as nothing less than the Kingdom of God in all the earth. This is all inclusive in its extent, embracing all races, colours and creeds. It is also all inclusive when considered intensively. The highest type of character is contemplated: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Mark 5:48.) But each congregation needs to interpret this in concrete terms in the lives of its own people.

The church which succeeded had a constructive program. It did not deal in generalities. That more ministers have no program except preaching must be laid, in part, at the door of the schools where they were supposed to be prepared for their life work.

14. LIVE IN THE WORLD OF REALITY

The minister at Forsythe (Case 23) was a great talker and was especially eloquent on what he had done. His "dispensations" did not seem to belong to the world in which his people lived. The leader in Cases 14, 15, and 21 were not living in the present world. The preacher in Renard (Case 22) uttered "sanctimonious platitudes" as if profound truths. The people knew these things did not belong to their world. Religion, therefore, appeared to be a sentimental, unreal something. Life is one thing; religion another. This seems fatal.

Every successful effort in all the churches studied dealt with real life. The church was meeting conditions as they existed: the foreigner; health; economic conditions; youth and its problems; the leisure time and social life of the people; and cooperation for the general good. Whatever the failings and mistakes the people knew the church was not play acting but giving itself in the service of all.

It is evident, for example, that economic conditions and religious life are intimately related. First in a narrow way; the poor parish does not feel it can afford to pay a decent salary and so it cannot call a live minister. It is content with a fourth rate leader. This sort of a minister does not lead the people out into a promised land either economically, intellectually or religiously. Indeed in some cases the church under such leadership seems to stand in the way of progress if not to be a real menace to the best and highest welfare of the community. This vicious circle is difficult to break. The problem is being approached in two ways: (a) By smaller places working together and combining forces. Several small churches acting as a unit may secure a well-educated minister and director. The larger parish plan is one type of this kind of co-operation. (b) By the help of the denomination. The director at Copperfield and Graniteville (Case 14) is largely supported by the denomination. She serves seven small country churches, several of which would otherwise have no leaders except such ministers as described.

In a wider sense: this study confirms what has been pointed out in other surveys that where people are economically free from harassing care and poverty the religious life is stronger. Perhaps this is part of the significance in the Master's care for people's nourishment and rest, and his interest in healing disease as well as in their more distinctively moral and religious needs.

15. STRESS RELIGIOUS VALUES

It takes no gift of "second sight" to see that the pastor at Renard (Case 22) who told questionable stories and assumed familiarity to gain popularity was making a mistake, or that the minister at Forsythe (Case 23) who peddled from door to door was selling his birthright.

But when a leader is the "whole show" and denies his people independent judgement (Cases 12, 21, etc.); degenerates into making his church service a vaudeville show entitled "The Lord's Washday" or "Bliss or Blister"; has no use for missions and thinks that jazz is worship, (Case 21); who uses his sermon to "get at" his people and attack others; who "can do nothing here" though there are eight hundred people as at Minterville (Case 24) and a lot of young people as at Forsythe (Case 23); he is not stressing religious values.

Religious values include at least the sense of God, the Ultimate Value; human welfare in the widest sense and including the whole world; and Christian character of the highest type, lived in the spirit of Jesus. Where these are uppermost as in Group A and in a few of Group B cases the people respond in a wonderful way.

This investigation makes abundantly clear that the church has the greatest mission—the development of true religion; that the people are responsive to it; that the needs are tremendous; and that the results are upbuilding, healing and inspiring. The facts seem to say: Stress the great character developing work among children, youth and adults. Let cheaper methods and appeals go. Follow the Great Teacher.

In conclusion, there are major ideals which stand out from most of the cases where creative Christian work is being carried on. The first is that all church work ought to be *on a Christian basis*. It is done to help humanity and without any seeking for personal or institutional reward. Will this help people to live better? Will it promote human welfare as interpreted by the Master? These are the questions and not, What will I get out of this in honour or prominence, or salary? How will this increase the church membership or revenue? The ideal for the church as for the individual is a readiness to lose its life without thought of reward.

A second is that the leader must develop *from the immediate situation* a *constructive program* embracing the best modern religious education and ministering to all life and to all groups.

The third point is that *all progress is purchased at the cost of some one's life blood.* The leaders who succeeded were those who counted neither cost nor hours nor toil. They were there to serve and they gave themselves with unremitting zeal in study, planning, calling, working, serving. In many cases of failure the leader loafed. He had as his ideal an easy time or he frittered away his time. To give oneself in sympathy, helpfulness, service and work, to serve and not be served, is the spirit of the ministers in this study whose churches were a force for good and made solid and substantial growth.

III

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

From a careful study of the cases cited the attempt is made here to select outstanding characteristics which seem to have made for success. It must not be forgotten that every case is known by the writers and that their knowledge is much more intimate and personal than could be conveyed in the descriptions in Part I.

There may be many other characteristics which make for a successful leadership in the country church. But these stand out in the leaders studied in these particular churches.

1. THE ABILITY TO SEE OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most marked characteristics of leaders in Group A was their ability to recognize opportunities. Every church described presented many difficulties and problems. The equipment, with the exception of Case 2, was meagre indeed. Predecessors had surrendered in discouragement. Some of the fields seemed beyond salvage.

This was especially true of Cases 2 and 3. A former pastor informed his successor that he had resigned because the situation was hopeless. He complained of the "few scattered families, no young people, no money, no leaders" in that community. Pine Valley (Case 4) had practically been abandoned. Leader after leader failed to change the seemingly hopeless situation. Only a few men would even consider such isolated fields.

One glorious thing about all of the Group A ministers is that they recognized in the very problems which these churches presented a distinct opportunity and challenge. They saw beyond the present limitations and discouragements. The very fact that other men had failed seemed to capture their interest, stir their imagination and urge them to action. And the remarkable result of their programs and labours was that these seemingly impossible fields produced rich harvests.

Instead of bemoaning the lack of leaders, equipment, finances, and young folk, these leaders began where they were, with what was available, using every means to develop leadership and release latent energy. Three of the Group A pastors succeeded where predecessors had failed. The fourth and the fifth followed a series of short and ineffective pastorates. One of the most inspiring men in the group (the pastor at Pine Valley) unfolded to his people from time to time undreamed of possibilities in that field. He was the means of improving housing conditions, school transportation and sociability in far away population centres.

On the other hand the pastor in Case 23 followed a successful leader and yet within a few months he had demolished the excellent work of his predecessor. It is astonishing how quickly a poor leader can demoralize a going program! Yet he was certain that his constituency did not have the capacity to appreciate the type of leadership he exemplified. It was the people who were always "wrong"; there was nothing the matter with him. He not only failed to see the opportunities but he was blind to his own defects,—two characteristics not unfrequently found together.

Case 22 was positive he knew his field. He was "dead certain" that no one could accomplish anything in a community composed mainly of foreigners. He reported that there were "no young people or children" in his community. When, by actual survey, this was disproved, there were found to be sixty-four between fifteen and twenty-four years of age. What he really lacked was vision and willingness to work.

The reader can find many similar illustrations in churches cited in Group C. These studies make it quite clear that the true leader recognizes in the challenges and problems which rural congregations present a distinct opportunity to render Christian service. A true leader sees beyond the discouragements and limitations. Possibilities loom up everywhere. He is a seer in the sense that he is aware of what is hidden to many other eyes. Nothing is quite so fatal in a minister's life as the inability to recognize needs and opportunities. Nor is anything more essential than the power to see latent possibilities. Some men with very limited equipment in their churches perform miracles. Others do not seem able to make use of advantages and opportunities that come to them. Blessed is the rural preacher who can see and grasp opportunities.

2. *A REAL LEADER LEADS*

Cases 12 and 21 portray the autocrat. He does not lead. He drives. He compels. His chief concern is to "put something over." He rides rough shod over the judgements and opinions of others. He cannot co-operate, cannot work *with* others. He must be "ministered unto" and conceive of himself as one set apart, one whose ideas and plans cannot be defective. This type almost invariably fails. The Silver Falls church prospered for a brief season but when disaster came it was complete. This pastor (Case 12) surrounded himself with a group of people who were swayed and controlled by ideas and plans which proved distinctly detrimental to the church. They were not led but were coerced by a domineering preacher who succeeded in destroying their ability to think and act intelligently.

By no stretch of imagination can we think of Christ acting in this way. He led his people. They followed him. He inspired them. They were drawn to him. Gently, yet fearlessly when occasion demanded it, he summoned men to follow him. He never compelled.

The inefficient leader is found in Cases 24 and 25. He neither drives nor leads. He lacks intelligence and vitality to do either. There is no evidence of what has been called "religious enthusiasm" in these men. Lacking it they cannot inspire others. Frequently they accept as final and inevitable minor rebuttals and failures. Cases 14, 15 and 24 by their appearance, clothing, carriage, voice and gestures, suggest resignation and defeat. If a plan which they suggest fails it is regarded as a complete defeat. For example, the minister in Case 24 met opposition when he suggested holding revival meetings. Henceforth he only prayed for solutions. Sometimes it is much easier to ask "the Lord" to interfere than it is to cooperate with Him intelligently and vigorously.

In Cases 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 we have the ability to lead abundantly exemplified. In no case, however, did progress and success come about by chance or by any short cut methods. Cases 2 and 3 laboured for several years in their respective fields before any real progress was discernable. Much labour and patience were necessary. People refused to move rapidly. New ideas had to become their own and some of the plans suggested by the pastor were not put into execution until advanced months or years later by members of the church as their own ideas. The good teacher or leader rejoices in this for it shows growth and development.

He knows how to lead people step by step until in due time they can see what to him had been evident for a long time. This characteristic of leadership was recognized long ago when it was written "He made known His ways unto Moses, His doings unto the children of Israel." (Ps. 103:7.)

3. THE POWER TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES

When the new pastor arrived at Mount Hope in 1924 he met serious difficulties. The first business meeting was a real "church fight." There was bitterness and hard feelings. The two "leading" deacons were enemies. The whole situation involved questions of moral living and of church life and work. Besides all this the young minister found himself doubted and his theology questioned by some of the would-be leaders. It was a delicate and trying situation. To maintain his position required courage and tact. The results of a five year pastorate fully justified his judgement and won for him the love and respect of his people.

The financial situation in Riland (Case 3) was disheartening. The total giving of the churches aggregated less than $500 per year. Properties were in sad disrepair. After nine years of sacrificial yet joyous labour the same pastor points to four church buildings in good repair and reasonably well equipped, and an annual budget exceeding $2,500 of which a considerable share goes to missions. The field taxed the endurance and skill of the pastor and his wife, but they had the joy of overcoming most of the difficulties in this important country parish.

Pine Valley (Case 4) is quite similar. The people were poor. They had never been interested in missionary giving. Their own problems overwhelmed them. When the new leader suggested projects which involved the investment of even small sums of money several deacons sincerely questioned the church's ability to stand this additional financial strain. But the record of this congregation indicates the splendid success which attended a courageous and wise leadership. By 1929 the churches combined in this larger parish invested nearly $2,000 annually in local work and gave over $200 to missionary projects!

At Mount Hope where the foreign population was greatly in the majority, ceaseless pastoral labours and friendship projects by the church people were necessary to overcome antagonisms and suspicious attitudes. And some of these problems remain of course as a challenge to this day.

Ascot (Case 1) presented what appeared to be a hopeless condition. A new morale had to be infused into these people. Every department in the church school was without leadership. The minister found it essential first of all to win the confidence of his people. Several years of persistent as well as consistent effort, painstaking planning and recasting of ideas were necessary. But here also the will to overcome difficulties was victorious.

On the other hand the reverse is true of Cases 12, 22, 24 and 25. These pastors could not overcome any serious obstacle. Difficult and delicate situations were evaded or ignored. The preachers became pessimistic or despondent and indifferent, or else resigned. But the successful leader is seldom defeated by problems. Temporary discouragements and defeats are not accepted as final failure.

4. LOVE OF PEOPLE

Interest in their people and love for them is more evident in the Group A leaders than any record herein presented can make clear. Indeed this boundless appreciation of the work among country folk is an outstanding characteristic of leaders 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 21b and 23a. Again and again the authors met rural ministers who lacked respect and reverence for their people. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for these men to render any service to country churches.

The pastor at Pine Valley (Case 4) radiated affection. Moreover, he expressed it in living deeds. He had no difficulty having a hearing. People came to him with their questions, perplexities and problems. It can be said of him as it was said of Christ that the "common people heard him gladly" and the reason was evident because he too "went about doing good."

Case 2 related remarkable experiences as a pastor-friend. He ministered to thirteen nationalities. Again and again he saved families from some moral, economic or social disaster. Homes were held intact by his pastoral care and young and old knew him as their counsellor, companion and friend. He was a true shepherd motivated by a Christ-like affection for friend and foe. Frequently he returned good for evil, and some kindness for injury. After several years of faithful shepherding he became known as the friend of Catholics, Jews and Protestants in that community.

The minister at Riland (Case 3) was unusually devoted to young people. He camped with them, attended summer conferences with them, shared their social affairs with apparent enjoyment and was the means of directing several in their educational and vocational aspirations. Beneath it all was a pastoral concern for the aged and the sick also. His labours knew no hours or seasons.

This was equally true of the well trained minister at Ascot. Though highly respected and honoured among men of scholarly attainments he knew how to share himself with the lowliest of people. There was no false pride or mistaken superiority about him. With Christian devotion and humility he worked among his people and developed a vigorous church from a discouraged group.

The minister at Mount Hope (Case 2) also was a lover of rural people. He shared the sorrows, trials and testings of a large parish. Young people unburdened to him the secrets of their heart, the aged and suffering found in him a tender shepherd and constant friend. Innumerable evidences of this man's devotion are suggested in the description of this active parish. When he resigned a gift of $5,000 was presented to his seminary in appreciation of his loyalty and devotion to the people in this community.

In contrast with the above we must present the discouraging facts about Cases 22, 23 and 25. Case 23 readily informed the writers that he had "no use for country folk." In his judgement they were illiterate and incapable of appreciating "good preaching." Considering the facts what good reason was there for the people of Forsythe to follow this mistaken leader? Was it not inevitable that they should shun this church whose leader so totally ignored them? They saw him going about selling toilet articles and fancy notions for personal profit, often neglecting precious opportunities to show his interest in them. His sermons, however "eloquent" had no reality. These earnest people felt that their preacher was not genuine and country folk can detect insincerity as quickly as any congregation.

Case 25 is equally tragic. This pastor called upon a half a dozen families in a community of many homes. About him were several people in distressing economic circumstances. This never disturbed him. Christ had fed the hungry multitude but this man's chief concern was his own welfare, and in seeking to save himself, he seems to have lost his soul. Yet he found it easy to preach about the "moral degeneracy of this generation" and gave much attention in the pulpit to the "dangers of modern life."

The pastor at Renard (Case 22) was well paid. His income far exceeded that of the farmers around him. All about him were cases of illness, illiteracy and want. It never occurred to him that the Christian church owed these people every possible service. Religion in this man's case had become largely divorced from humanitarian service. What he considered correct theological thinking was far more consequential than correct living. Had he loved people he could not have degraded himself and others by telling questionable stories.

A rural leader can not hope to be of constructive usefulness unless his heart throbs with affection for people. He must love even the unlovely and unlovable just as Christ did. His ministry centres in a Christ-like love, or compassion for the people whom he has been called to serve.

5. THE "SECOND MILE" SPIRIT

It is evident from an examination of cases presented in Part I that many ministers seem unwilling to do more than is required. If they conceive of their ministry as a "call to preach" (Case 13) rather than as a call to serve, their activities are narrowed to pulpit orations. As a matter of fact the uncooperative spirit of Case 13 preached a far more effective message than any word-sermon he ever uttered. Cases 21 and 23 also felt that they were called to preach not "to ring doorbells." They were proud of being "prophets." In the pulpit by unctuous intonations they emphasized meaningless shibboleths and hollow platitudes.

Case 22 actually stated the case very clearly: "It is not my business to find out when and where people want the preacher. If they need me let them call me up as they do their doctor!" Yet this man at a certain ministers' conference voiced the opinion that the minister was a "man of God." Supposing Christ had been a man of God according to that pattern!

When Case 4 arrived at Pine Valley no stipulation was made as to what he should do or should not do. But it did not require many weeks for him to discover a score of projects which required the second mile spirit. No one asked him to re-open two of the distant preaching stations—nor did anyone petition him to labour in their fields or to patch their barns and fences. Strictly speaking it was not his business to insist that the Farm Bureau leaders visit some of the isolated farms in Pine Valley. No one expected his wife to care for the little children that were brought to the church during week days. This man and woman were constantly doing more than was required. They went the second mile with cheerfulness and joy.

The pastor at Mount Hope (Case 2) carried this spirit into all his work. He found time for everybody. He called upon a number of families of alien faith fully aware that he could not attract them into his church. He made calls in all seasons and weather which easily might have been omitted. He sought employment for young people in distant centres. He arranged the college plans of several. He spent nights and days with families in distress when just a formal call might have been all that was expected. He shared the sufferings of many families as though they were his own.

No contract clause called for week-day religious education, vacation schools, summer camps, friendship socials and numerous charity activities. He extended his service to many nearby pastorates. He served on important state committees and gave his service gratis to summer schools for rural pastors. He exemplified the second mile spirit. Rewards and returns were not primary motives. Had he confined himself to ordinary pastoral activities he could have saved himself hours of anxiety and countless problems.

The young minister at Brunswick (Case 5) became interested in the physical as well as the moral welfare of his people. The entire countryside was transformed by his manifold interests and humanitarian activities. He walked the second mile.

One leader tends to find fault with the field and the people which compose his church, another seizes every circumstance and opportunity to express the Christian spirit. He does more than is required. These latter are true leaders. True to their Master's word, they immediately find that one of the deepest satisfactions in the Christian ministry is the inner consciousness of having gone the second mile.

6. HUMILITY

One of the most lasting impressions of the leader in the Ascot (Case 1) church was his humility. Though recognized far and wide as an outstanding religious educator, pastor and leader there was not the slightest suggestion of superiority or conscious pride about him. In every respect he was well qualified for positions of honour and responsibility yet he accepted his task in this rural field with a sense of dignity and reverence. Intimate friends respected his ability but admired most of all his humility.

Case 21 is a marked contrast. Here was a pastor who enjoyed being fêted. Everything in the church service centred in the man on the platform rather than in God and his cause. He deliberately played to "the galleries" and received his reward! It was evident that this was his meat and drink.

Case 2 while a good leader was at heart thoroughly humble. He was aware of his failures far more keenly than of any of his successes. Christian leaders about him admired him for his religious enthusiasm and his ability to introduce extensive projects of religious education into a very conservative community. He was recognized by colleges and seminaries as a pioneer in rural religious education. He numbered intimate friends among the wealthiest as well as the poorest in the community. Considerable praise was showered upon him by state officials and religious leaders. All of this only tended to increase his humility.

Case 12 was diametrically the opposite. When he spoke about his church and its program it was in a boastful manner magnifying his own part. In the pulpit he exalted himself. He enjoyed controversies because that focused public attention upon the Silver Falls church. His haughty, dogmatic spirit was imitated by several of the church leaders. For years after his resignation this pride and blind positiveness continued to injure the church.

Case 13a belittled the achievements of a fellow pastor while he exalted the attitude and methods of his own church. Case 23 resented any references to his predecessor, while he found abundant excuses for his own failures.

One feature of the pastorates at Mount Hope, Riland, and Ascot was the habitual recognition of others. In each case, several projects though actually originated by the pastor, were initiated and completed without his name being mentioned. Group A leaders gloried in the developing initiative of the people and always sought to give them the prominence. One of their chief concerns was that the people should share in the onward progress of the church.

These leaders were proud of their opportunities and of the progress being made, but never consciously boastful. They knew too well how imperfect their best work was; how little had been accomplished; and how much remained to be done. Under such circumstances, one inevitably feels his dependence on friends and fellow workers and especially upon God, the Lord and Father of all.

7. COOPERATIVENESS

Within the past generation enormous changes in matters of cooperation have taken place in rural districts. Economic necessity, class consciousness and desires to possess more of life socially, educationally, and materially have given birth to many cooperative enterprizes. Very often the Christian church has been the source of these activities; but very often if the truth must be told, it has been indifferent to these attempts or has directly opposed them. When this happens it is due to the non-cooperative type of leaders in our rural churches.

The pastors at Lindsey (Case 21) and Centerville (Case 13) deliberately shunned all contacts with other ministers. They discouraged by preachment and practise all efforts to cooperate. Obviously no progress is possible under such leaders. In several cases, though the church was "strongly sectarian," it refused to cooperate even with its own denomination. The excuse given was that certain denominational leaders were too liberal. This was supposed to justify withholding funds which in turn caused hardships upon earnest missionaries in foreign lands.

The attitude of this type of preachers to other churches was deplorable. One minister began his pastorate by preaching a series of sermons "against" other denominations. He lost some of his own people of course. Another publicly opposed lodges, the grange, clubs and all cooperative agencies. It was inevitable that community leaders objected and refused to support a church which had become anti-social.

Case 21 secretly carried out a community canvas one Sunday afternoon. His reason for this was that he was "putting something over" on his brethren in the other churches! The ethics of such a procedure did not trouble him. In the cases studied no country churches prospered which had non-cooperative pastors in the pulpits.

It is refreshing to contemplate the heroic efforts to promote friendly cooperation in such parishes as Mount Hope (Case 2). Agencies outside the church were asked to assume the responsibility of an annual church service. Several socials were promoted by organizations not directly related to the church but working harmoniously with the latter. This community also illustrates the difficulties which had to be surmounted before the church membership could be united in any cooperative efforts. The extensive program reveals something of the advantage of cooperation with upbuilding agencies.

At Pine Valley, Ascot and Brunswick people who had never seen the value of working together for the common good came to recognize its value and to demand more of it. This spirit extended beyond the church and the local community. The church cooperated with agricultural and health agencies. In fact the busiest pastors were also the most active in state and national work. They did not ignore their own fields. Their records verify every claim made for them as leaders whose eagerness to cooperate knew no bounds.

This study suggests that the future of the country church will be determined to a considerable extent by its willingness to link together in the closest fellowship all community enterprizes and agencies that have for their objective the welfare of mankind.

8. A GROWING MIND

To keep abreast of the times, to welcome new suggestions, to read liberally and to resist the tendency to become dogmatic and self-centred are earmarks of a good leader.

Pine Valley (Case 4) is an isolated field. The pastor was far removed from direct contacts with other clergymen. For several months during the winter, roads were almost impassable. Here was every excuse for becoming self-sufficient and narrow. Yet this leader used a distant state library, read generously about rural life and distributed worth-while reading matter among his people. In the summer he regularly attended a summer school for country pastors. He was the only registered representative of his denomination there. Several pastors lived within a few miles of this school but failed to attend. This man grew; the others probably did not.

A frequent comment about the leader at Mount Hope (Case 2) was that he "had grown" very rapidly. The secret of this was apparent. Having completed his seminary course and accepted a pastorate he at once enrolled in a school forty miles distant for further training. He attended several summer schools and conferences. His library was small but very choice. Aside from his studies in school he pursued special courses at home. He read liberally and kept in constant contact with a changing world order.

Case 3 after several years in the pastorate at Riland entered a college (over fifty miles away) attending regularly twice each week. He was enthusiastic about summer schools for rural pastors and found time to go himself. The young minister at Brunswick (Case 5) developed with his people. Extensive reading courses and further educational aspirations were the means of bringing him academic honours and success in the pastorate.

Unfortunately this can be said of very few cases observed. Case 21 was a perfect example of what may be termed a "closed mind." His reading was limited to books and periodicals which affirmed what he believed. If, by chance, he came upon a book with a different point of view, he did not read it through but used isolated statements torn from their context to prove its inconsistencies. Cases 22, 23, 24 and 25 all fall into the same category. Growth was impossible. Case 14 fortified old beliefs and ideas by reading only strongly sectarian periodicals. Case 11 on the other hand, though a college and seminary graduate, felt his need of further training so keenly that in his first pastorate he used to drive forty miles to a seminary which offered rural courses.

In a day of rapid changes and innumerable innovations one must cultivate the habit of discrimination. But this does not mean a "closed mind." It ought to mean the ability to choose the highest and the best, to keep one's vision unblurred by dogmatism and to welcome whatever is helpful, be it new, or old. A leader fails to remain a true leader the moment his horizons cease expanding.

9. CLEANLINESS AND COMMON HONESTY

It ought to be unnecessary to devote even a paragraph to this discussion. It is apparent, however, that some ministers do not recognize these "old fashioned virtues" as essential.

When the pastor at Renard resigned, he left a number of smaller debts unpaid. There was no excuse for this. He was one of the best paid country ministers in the state but also one of the most slovenly in appearance and manners. His clothing was never clean or pressed and the description in Part I of his general conduct is understated.

The minister, whether he believes himself to be a "man of God" or not must respect promises and, at least in public appearances, be clean and neat. Nothing is more repulsive to people than to be called upon to follow a man who is their inferior culturally or ethically. Case 15 spent most of his time "around the house." Case 21 gloried in a promised beautiful "land on high" but failed to see the dust and disorder in his own church.

One of the neatest and most carefully dressed pastors received the least salary. A small salary does not prevent cleanliness. The man at Renard (Case 22) had an income twice as large as the pastor at Pine Valley (Case 4). One was unkempt and not scrupulously honest; the other scrupulously clean and honourable. Apparently it is the man that makes the difference, not his salary.

The people of Mount Hope were proud of their minister. They compared his appearance with that of others and rejoiced. This man camped, several summers in succession, with a group of young people. They knew him in and out of the pulpit as being equally clean and dependable. Case 3 attended several conferences and week-end outings with his young folk. Through the years their respect and affection for their pastor increased. He had proved himself genuine.

Case 22 attempted to "win" people, especially the foreign born, by relating questionable stories. Of course he failed. It is of course impossible to advance the Kingdom of God by such methods. While Case 21 considered it "sinful" to attend a church social function his moral obligations did not seem to concern him greatly. It was sinful to be sociable, but not sinful to use the church's time to peddle luxuries and notions for personal profit.

The ministers in Group A were exceedingly careful in word, deed and appearance. They were honourable, dependable and trustworthy. This is what is expected of a minister. Case 25 often appeared with his teeth and lips stained by tobacco juice. Even his hands and clothing were often soiled in this way. His personal appearance preached some very telling and destructive sermons.

Honour and cleanliness may be old virtues but they are just as essential today as ever. The minister above all other men should be a shining example in all his relationships with men and cleanliness certainly is kindred to godliness.

10. RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM

Most candidates for the Christian ministry begin their career with abundant enthusiasm. Many retain this spirit through the years; but some lose all the glow.

A more intimate knowledge of each leader described in Part I than can be imparted in a written record verifies the statement that the leaders in Group A were filled with religious enthusiasm. They were not extraordinary men in any sense but they did excell in their devotion to God and the welfare of the people. Their ardour for the cause increased with the years. They were certain that the "good news" must be shared and imparted to all men.

Three of these men had passed through deep religious experiences. Some had undergone severe testings and trials. One had experienced a real tragedy. All of this merely enriched their faith in the Christian message. Case 2 credited his success to the influence of religion in his own life. Case 4 radiated the same spirit. Their eagerness to share with others the joy and enthusiasm which was their own was contagious. This genuine enthusiasm for the gospel sent the Group A ministers out into the highways and byways serving wherever needs occurred. They knew Christ as "companion and friend," and their sermons breathed the atmosphere of a simple faith in God.

These are in direct contrast to the unhappy despondency of Case 24, or the indifference of Case 23. Everyone of the leaders in Group A added a consistent number of members each year to the church. The Group C men did not. Even where mass evangelistic meetings were held as at Centerville (Case 13) and Lindsey (Case 21) no substantial increase either in giving or membership could be registered. Case 4 changed the situation in Pine Valley without a single mass-evangelistic meeting. This was also true at Ascot and Riland (Cases 1 and 3).

Group A ministers would not consider calling an unknown evangelistic party into their field for special efforts. This was not because they objected to special meetings but because they had seen too many unfavourable results from such campaigns and preferred to carry on a constructive program of educational evangelism. Back of their success was their own unfailing religious enthusiasm and the conviction that men need God and the fellowship of Christ.

It is clear from a study of the cases cited that ministers who lack religious enthusiasm, and warmth of feeling; who do not have a yearning love for their people, are not soul winners in any sense whatsoever. Religious leaders must possess a burning conviction that the Christian religion, irrespective of its defects, contains within itself the hope and promise of the abundant life. The deadlines in many of these country churches was due to the preacher's lack of religious winsomeness. One cannot impart to others what he himself does not possess. If Christ does not cause one's own heart to glow with love and compassion, certainly the church membership cannot become enthused about it.

11. ADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

A comparison of the educational preparations of all three groups reveals the following facts:

Three of the Group A men had full college and seminary training and, in addition, graduate work in religious education. One man (Case 4) is not a college graduate. But he reads generously and attends summer schools for rural pastors. Another is a graduate of a standard seminary and is pursuing post graduate work in another school. He also reads liberally and is well informed.

Only one pastor in Group B has had college courses (Case 11). He is also taking post graduate work in a nearby seminary. Three men are short cut men, two of them having had no high school background. One man claims to be a seminary graduate but there are no available records anywhere of his graduation. Only one man (Case 11) reads fairly generously. The others will not consider books or literature by schools of thought differing from their own.

One man in Group C proudly announced that he was not a graduate of any school anywhere. The "Lord had called him to preach" and that was all. Case 22 was an honour student in high school and a graduate from a standard seminary. He does not, however, interest himself in reading helpful books. One man was ordained after having completed a correspondence school course and another is a Bible school graduate but lacks high school training.

In some cases it was a bit difficult to get the facts about a man's education. Case 23 spoke as though he had "several college degrees" and Case 25 talked freely about "when he was in college" but both apparently lacked even a high school course.

The best trained leader senses his need of further education. All of the Group A men, however well prepared scholastically, were keen to keep on learning and growing. They read with eagerness the ideas and suggestions of experienced leaders. Expert advice was welcomed indeed. While on the other hand the Group B and C men with few exceptions were fully satisfied with their understanding of life and people.

Several seminary graduates confessed that their courses did not prepare them for country work. Many schools do not pretend to teach rural methods and programs though the majority of their graduates live in rural parishes. Clearly the best educated minister is none too well equipped for service in country churches. He needs the most careful preparation in rural life, rural sociology, religious education and an experience in rural fields.

12. THE PRACTISE OF CHRIST-LIKENESS

This is the chief essential of Christian leadership. No amount of education or depth of knowledge can become a substitute for Christ-like living. Education is exceedingly important. Every rural minister worthy of the calling will recognize that, but to live a transparently genuine Christian life is by all odds the most important.

The study herein made reveals that this cannot be credited to some leaders. If they were more like Christ they could not be indifferent to human wants and needs. If his spirit ruled their life they would minister with joy and compassion, without complaint or pride to every person within their parish. Happily the majority of country pastors feel that way and are rendering heroic service without ostentation. Christ lives in them and shines through their deeds and words. The supreme need is for greater Christ-likeness in all leaders. This will help to solve more problems and inspire more Christian living than countless sermons. Just as Christ loved all without discrimination, so the rural pastor must seek to serve every home and every person in his parish. Above all, he must be like the Master in his motives, attitudes and actions. Nothing can take the place of this fundamental characteristic of the Christian leader. In his daily walk and conversation he must be Christ-like.

APPENDICES

I

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II

EVANGELISM FOR A COUNTRY CHURCH *

The American Baptist Home Mission Society, recognizing the need of evangelistic efforts in every community and the necessity of facing the problems involved, in a spirit of cooperation and good-will hereby presents a suggested program of rural evangelism adaptable to any field.

It is understood that these suggestions do not cover the entire question of evangelism. Portions may be eliminated or added as the need arises. It is our hope that this material will be found suggestive and helpful.

OBJECTIVES

Every church should clearly understand what the objectives are. It is not enough for the minister and a few leaders to appreciate this; the church as a whole should discuss, adopt, and carry out what it discovers to be its reasonable objectives. Rural evangelism must be a cooperative project in which all ages and all departments share.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES?

1. The church should minister to all the needs of all the people within the areas it serves, and prove by Christian helpfulness that it is absolutely genuine and sincere and unselfish in seeking to enable people to solve life's pressing problems in the Christian way.

2. The church should endeavour to win the individuals in every family to definite allegiance to Christ and to secure their cooperation in making the community Christian, and to assume its proper share in making Christ known to the world.

3. The church in every phase of its program, whether recreational, educational, social, or distinctly religious, should contribute to the making of a rural life that will be

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* See Introduction, page xi, second paragraph.

richer, happier, and nobler and Christian in the fullest sense.

KNOW THE FIELD

A knowledge of the field is positively essential before any successful program can be launched.

Any study of the local area must be inaugurated by pastor and people together.

This study should reveal the actual local conditions, morally, religiously, economically, socially and educationally.

PROGRAM BASED ON NEEDS

What are the needs as revealed by the study? Are the people burdened by poverty or too many comforts? Is life too hard or too easy? Are the people indifferent to progress and church programs?

Single out from the many needs, as revealed by the study, what the essentials are. Is it cooperation, friendliness, better understanding, more social or religious life, etc.?

THE PROGRAM IN ACTION

Underlying any effective program in rural evangelism is the spirit of cooperation and friendliness.

Secure the confidence, good-will, aid, and prayer of people and organizations in the local area. Do nothing to antagonize, and as far as possible unite with surrounding churches in promoting these ideals.

Realize the importance and Christian values of friendly socials, get-togethers, and cooperative sharing of all phases of community life. Give and create opportunities for concrete expressions of good-will, through helpful services on such occasions as Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year, Easter, Armistice Day, or at any other time.

Preach continuously and persistently on themes that will inspire and promote exactly what is included in the program of friendliness and cooperation. Above all, proclaim assurance of forgiveness, charity, divine love, and human brotherhood, uphold the friendly Christ whom the common people heard so gladly.

Through family worship, prayer groups, and devotional meetings keep the spiritual content and objectives of the entire program before all the people.

Provide a rich content for the worship services and the church school so that they may radiate comradeship, good-will, and Christian fellowship.

Promote vacation church schools (D. V. B. S.).

Use public schools for friendship-socials and contacts.

Encourage week-day religious instruction in church schools where possible, and use homes for this purpose in remote sections.

Organize summer outings; picnics; family reunions; home-coming days in church; harvest festivals; national anniversaries.

Enlist the prayers and help of young people in eliminating divisions, ill feelings, and in promoting all that is implied in the stated objectives. Give them the opportunity for self-expression under constructive leadership.

Give the children a real place in the church worship, Sunday school, and social gatherings.

Make the church grounds, building exterior, and rooms particularly neat, clean, and attractive. Torn hymnals, Bibles, and leaflets often leave unfavourable impressions.

Train leadership through special classes and groups, always emphasizing ideals of unity, better understanding, good-will, and loyalty to Christ.

Let your gospel be cheerful and stimulating in word and deed.

HARVESTING RESULTS

Through personal interviews and efforts enlist others in the cause of Christ, and help them to see their opportunity and privilege to share in the more abundant life through Christ.

Use local leadership, and when it seems advisable to secure outside aid, that is, an evangelist or a neighbouring pastor, exercise the greatest care in the choice of such leadership and cooperate in this matter with state officials.

* * * *Decisions are of tremendous religious value and should be brought about in a normal, happy, and inspiring manner. The best results will be obtained through pastoral and personal evangelization rather than by spasmodic efforts.

There is no reason why public worship should not be thoroughly evangelistic all the year through, and opportunity given whenever conditions justify the personal and public confession of Christ as Saviour and Lord.

* * * * *

There should be in every church whenever possible a class for those who are about to become church-members. This class should carefully and prayerfully consider the implications of the Christ-like life and the duties and obligations it involves. There should be emphasis upon the positive need of the individual church-member sharing in some specific way in the work of the church through giving, regular church attendance, and the doing of some specific task. * * * *There are opportunities for service in the church school, home-visitation groups, auxiliary organizations or other activities calling for kindness and for the work to which this person may be especially adapted. By all means, save the new convert and church-member from becoming a loss within a few years.

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